FUNDING PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE:
A CASE STUDY FROM THE FELLOWSHIP OF AFFIRMING MINISTRIES

By

JUAN BATTLE, PHD

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ABSTRACT

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This research asks how relationships among progressive theologians, social justice, and capitalism can be strengthened. Specifically, how can faith-based leaders engaged in the project of social justice be successfully oriented to acquire and leverage economic resources to implement social justice work? A study was conducted during The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries' (TFAM) – an organization designed "to support religious leaders and laity in moving toward a theology of radical inclusivity" – 2022 national gathering of more than 200 leaders in Phoenix, AZ. During that gathering, a 90-minute "Grant Proposal Writing" workshop was conducted. This hands-on workshop exposed participants to strategies for identifying, applying for, acquiring, and administering funding from private donors, foundations, and government agencies. After the workshop, an evaluation/survey was distributed measuring participant assessment of the utility of the workshop in developing individual-level economic, social, and human capital. Twenty-seven participants completed the survey. Univariate and bivariate statistical analyses measured the relationships between the three dependent variables (Percent Increase in Sources, Percent Increase in People, and Percent Increase in Knowledge) and the five independent variables (gender, race, education, TFAM tenure, workshop usefulness). Findings revealed that women, Black respondents, and those without graduate degrees benefited more from the workshop than did their counterparts. Results were mixed for respondents with varying levels of tenure within TFAM and for those who found the workshop most useful. The final

chapter of this document delineates procedures and findings from a five-member ministerial competencies' committee (Rev. Dr. Lynn Sexton; Bishop Tonyia Rawls; Rev. Mark Fowler; Dr. Nicole Lucas, PhD; and Dr. Joe Lott, PhD) around three themes (leadership, counseling, and strategic engagement).

Dedication Placeholder

Acknowledgements Placeholder

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Chapter 1 – Introduction and Background

Research Question

How can interrelationships among progressive theologians, social justice, and capitalism be strengthened? More specifically, how can faith-based leaders who are engaged in the project of social justice be more successfully oriented to acquire and leverage economic resources to implement their social justice work?

Social Justice, Capitalism, and Christianity

For many cultures, social justice refers to the processes and outcomes that ensure individuals receive what they are entitled to from society.[1] More globally, the term refers to removing obstacles to making that happen.[2] Though it has many components and manifestations, for the purpose of this document, capitalism will refer to an economic system characterized by the private ownership of the means of production for profit.[3]

When discussing religion in capitalism, the topic becomes much more complicated. As early as 1904, German sociologist Max Weber argued that religion, albeit by accident, was a driving force behind the development of what was then considered modern capitalism. In 1930,

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[1] Ayelet Banai, Miriam Ronzoni, and Christian Schemmel, *Social Justice, Global Dynamics: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2011); Mary T. Clark, "Augustine on Justice," in *Augustine and Social Justice*, ed. Teresa Delgado, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 3–10.

[2] G. N. Kitching, *Seeking Social Justice Through Globalization Escaping a Nationalist Perspective* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 3–10; Cecile Lawrence and Natalie Churn, *Movements in Time Revolution, Social Justice, and Times of Change* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub. 2012), xi–xv.

[3] Mariana V. Rosser and J Barkley Rosser, *Comparative Economics in a Transforming World Economy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 7; Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Weber published his seminal work titled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Fischoff excellently reviews the controversies produced from the text.[4]

More recently, Rodney Stark propounds a theory that Christian rationality is the primary driver behind the success of capitalism.[5] John B. Cobb asserts that it is obvious that "Western society is organized in the service of wealth," and thus wealth has triumphed over God in the West.[6] Most of these positions rest upon John Chamberlain's argument that "Christianity tends to lead to a capitalistic mode of life whenever siege conditions do not prevail... [Capitalism] is not Christian in and by itself; it is merely to say that capitalism is a material by-product of the Mosaic Law."[7]

Löwy leaves little to interpretation, arguing that "one must see capitalism as a religion."[8] This ties closely to Landauer's thesis that

> "God is an artifact made by humans, which gains a life of its own, attracting to himself the lives of humans, and finally becoming more powerful than humanity. The only cast, the only idol, the only God, to whom human beings gave life is money. Money is artificial and it is alive, money produces money and more money, money has all the power in the world. … Money does not create wealth, it is wealth, it is wealth in itself; there is no other wealth than money.[9]

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[4] E. Fischoff, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The History of a Controversy," *Social Research* 11, no. 1 (February 1944): 53-77.

[5] Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2005).

[6] John B Cobb, Jr., "Eastern View of Economics." *Religion Online*, Speech June 24, 2010, https://www.religion-online.org/article/eastern-view-of-economics/.

[7] J. Chamberlain, *The Roots of Capitalism* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1976).

[8] M. Löwy, "Capitalism as Religion: Walter Benjamin and Max Weber." *Historical Materialism* 17(1) (January 2009): 60-73.

[9] Gustav Landauer, *Aufruf zum Sozialismus* (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1919), 144.

This discussion of religion and capitalism creates a continuum with two opposing ends. One end of the continuum argues that wealth is an evil curse and should be fought against, while the other end of the continuum sees wealth and prosperity as a blessing from God and a reflection of God's favor towards man.[10] John Wesley, the father of the Methodist tradition, was a strong proponent of gaining wealth, according to his famous "Sermon 50," in which he said, "gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can."

David W. Miller attempted to take this two-dimensional approach and expand it into three dimensions. In short, he constructed a three-part rubric which presents three prevalent attitudes among Protestants towards wealth. According to his rubric, Protestants have variously viewed wealth as: (1) an offense to the Christian faith, (2) an obstacle to faith, or (3) the outcome of faith.[11]

One could easily develop a timeline for prosperity theology in the United States. It would start from the Healing Revivals in the 1950s, thru the New Thought movement, to the Word of Faith movement and 1980s televangelism.

Theological and Biblical Context

There are arguably over 2,000 references in the Bible to the poor. Scriptures exist defending the rights of the poor (Proverbs 29:7, Proverbs 31:8-9, Proverbs 21:13, Zechariah 7:10), explicating how the poor should be treated (Deuteronomy 15:1-5, Leviticus 25:35),

[10] Alan S. Kahan, *Mind vs. Money: The War Between Intellectuals and Capitalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 43.

[11] Miller, David W. (April 2007). "Wealth Creation as Integrated with Faith: A Protestant Reflection," *Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Views on the Creation of Wealth* (April 2007), https://studylib.net/doc/7761319/wealth-creation-as-integrated-with-faith--a-protestant-re....

delineating God's justice for the poor (Deuteronomy 26:6-9, Luke 4:16-19), and encouraging the poor (Psalm 14:6, Proverbs 19:1, Psalm 72:12-14, and 2 Corinthians 8:9).

The Bible, however, is also replete with scriptures that have been used to justify or promote financial stability and prosperity. Links are made between wealth and righteousness (Proverbs 8:1; Psalm 112:3); and that the benefits of prosperity are available for both men (Psalm 49:16; Ecclesiastes 5:19) and women (Proverbs 3:16), as well as across generations (Deuteronomy 28:11; Deuteronomy 8:18; Proverbs 13:22). Wealth is clearly seen as a blessing (Proverbs 10:22), as comprehensive (Psalm 1:3; Philippians 4:19), as overwhelming (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38), and as a conduit for friendships (Proverbs 19:4). Concomitant with wealth is, among other things, good health and success (Joshua 1:8).

While this debate is literally Biblical, this research will use Deuteronomy 8:18 as its theological justification – "For it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant …". That covenant is the agreement to implement the work of social justice. More specifically, "Truly I say to you, Whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

Theoretical Framework

In this section is an explanation of the theoretical frameworks that will be used to understand the interrelationship among progressive theologians, social justice, and capitalism.

Intersectionality, as we currently understand it, was conceived and birthed within the feminist movement and addresses the layered as well as intersecting ways marginalized groups are oppressed. Much of its focus is on how race, class, and gender intersect. A consensus exists

among scholars and activists that both theory and action are needed to demand social justice for marginalized groups.[12]

Within the academy, and beyond, intersectionality has been constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed into a variety of ways. Bauer et al., however, offer a fairly comprehensive meta-analysis and review of its emergence and application. They offer four criteria necessary for an effective use of intersectionality in research[13]:

1. a clear definition of the term
2. citation of foundational authors[14]
3. employment or citations of intersectionality methods papers
4. use of "intersectional" categories explicitly tied to social power

In sum, they argue that:

> In order for intersectionality to be clearly understood within quantitative studies, authors must explicitly identify the intersectional positions of interest and how they reflect social power, as well as specify their intersectional approaches, assumptions, and interpretations, making the match between theory and methods clear.[15]

[12] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* (1991) 43, 61; Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 3, (2005): 1771–1800; S. Cho, K. W. Crenshaw, and L. McCall, "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 38, no. 4, (2013) 785–810.

[13] G. Bauer et al., (2021). "Intersectionality in Quantitative Research: A Systematic Review of Its Emergence and Applications of Theory and Methods," *SSM - Population Health* 14, (2021), 1-11.

[14] P. H. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 1990); Combahee River Collective, Combahee River Collective Statement. (1977). https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf; K. Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* Vol. 1 Iss. 1, (1989). http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8; Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins."

[15] Bauer et al. "Intersectionality in Quantitative Research," 14.

For the purpose of this research, the issues of power will deal with the unequal distribution of wealth due to capitalism and the relationship between capitalism and religion.[16]

Self-Reflection and Positionality

My own intellectual and experiential lens creates and confines me to embark upon this intellectual and experiential journey first through race, second through class, and finally through gender. My male privilege all too often clouds my ability to see gender … though I am constantly experiencing it and am privileged by it. Here I'm not defending, but am describing my own limitations.

Three pivotal experiences bring me to this work. The first one has to do with my childhood and the young adult season of my life. In short, as a child less than 5 years old, I was living in a station wagon with my mother, father, and four brothers and sisters. About 20 years later, at the age of 25, I was completing my PhD at the University of Michigan. The variables that caused that outcome are too numerous to delineate here, but they forever colored my view of the role of socioeconomic status and its impact on life course events.

The second event that happened in my life which greatly influences how I approach this work took place during college. I was taking a course on comparative religions. The class was discussing the creation story from a variety of religious traditions. The professor asked the class

[16] On the unequal distribution of wealth, see Christina Gibson-Davis and Heather D. Hill, "Childhood Wealth Inequality in the United States: Implications for Social Stratification and Well-being." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 7, no. 3 (2021), 1-26; Alexandra Killewald, and Brielle Bryan, "Falling Behind: The Role of Inter- and Intragenerational Processes in Widening Racial and Ethnic Wealth Gaps Through Early and Middle Adulthood," *Social Forces* 97, no. 2 (2018), 705-740. On the relationship between capitalism and religion, see Robert J. Barro and Rachel McCleary, "The Wealth of Religions," In *The Wealth of Religions: The Political Economy of Believing and Belonging* ed. Rachel McCleary and Robert J. Barro (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Christoph Deutschmann, *Disembedded Markets: Economic Theology and Global Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Cesare Silla, *The Rise of Consumer Capitalism in America, 1880–1930*. (New York: Routledge, 2018).

which of all the lessons that could be learned from the creation story was most important. The bulk of the class provided the kinds of answers one would expect. They talked about gender relationships or the Adam and Eve story; they talked about the importance of good and evil or the snake and the apple story; while others chose to focus on God's relationship with man. The professor noticed I was not contributing to the conversation and called me out specifically. He asked why I was looking so perplexed and what I felt to be the most important lesson from the creation story. Unlike any of my colleagues, I felt the most important part of the story was that there were four streams running through the garden of Eden. I shared that without the water, nothing that lived in the garden could be sustained. Based on that, I concluded that to be successful one needs four sources of resources. The class looked at me in amazement. As I looked back at them, it became apparent to me that money was indeed my ministry.

The third event took place shortly after I moved to Brooklyn in New York City. I joined a fairly large church. Every first Sunday parishioners were encouraged to bring a small grocery bag of nonperishable items. Towards the end of the service, the parishioner would take their bags to the front of the church and lay them at the base of the pulpit. At which point the pastor would pray over the food and ask for an increase and multiplication, similar to the fish and five loaves of bread. Parishioners were told that the food would go to feeding the hungry, especially the hungry in the larger community that surrounded the church. I noticed, however, that 95 percent of food was being taken by the parishioners themselves. In short, there was just as much food insecurity inside the church building as there was outside and around the church building.

After several Sundays of witnessing this, I became bothered by this methodology. I was convinced there was enough food in New York City to feed the hungry in New York City. The

issue was getting it from wherever it was to this church. After approaching the pastor with my concerns, he gave me the green light to do what I could to increase the amount of food the church could access and thus feed the hungry. I made my way from Brooklyn to the Bronx and found churches that had strong community food programs. I quickly learned that all of them got their food from the same distributor. I contacted that distributor, filled out the necessary paperwork, and within days, enough canned and bagged food arrived in trucks that could have easily fed a couple hundred people.

Because the delivery trucks just dropped the food in the courtyard, the members of the church who were there that day were tasked with bringing the food into the building that was used for offices, choir rehearsals, and more. Cans were literally stacked from floor to ceiling in many of the rooms and even took up some space on the stairs leading to the second floor. The second floor was practically completely full with food. The pastor and assistant pastor could not believe the overflow of food that showed up. As they began to chastise me for getting so much food delivered, I explained to them that the bigger problem was not the food that was delivered. The bigger problem was that another delivery was expected within three days.

From that experience, I learned that my greatest contribution was not what I had, but was what I could get. What applied to food at a particular church at a particular moment in time (the ability to garner resources), soon infiltrated my career and has done so to this day.

Again, in short, it's clear to me that money … or the acquisition and management of wealth … is my ministry.

Explaining "Black"

Concerning race, throughout this document, the term Black will refer to people of the African Diaspora and to such populations that reside within the United States. To some, African Americans are a subgroup within the larger Black community. Since the discussion here purposely includes those who may be first-generation immigrants or who, for whatever reason, do not identify as African American, the term "Black" is employed. Furthermore, it is capitalized to distinguish the racial category and related identity from the color.

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapters two through five are each briefly described below.

Chapter 2: Lessons Learned from the Activist Leader (Bishop Yvette Flunder)

The first part of this chapter includes an introduction and summary of the entire chapter. Particular attention is paid to "lessons learned" by both Bishop Yvette Flunder as well as by the student (me, Juan Battle). The second part of the chapter includes excerpts from transcripts of conversations between Bishop Flunder and Juan. Ultimately, the purpose of this chapter/interview is fourfold: (1) learn and grow, (2) honor legacy, (3) model ministry, and (4) write history.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes the methods employed to conduct the research for the dissertation.

Chapter 4: Results

Univariate and bivariate statistical analyses were conducted measuring the relationships among the three dependent variables (Percent Increase in Sources, Percent Increase in People, and Percent Increase in Knowledge) and the five independent variables (gender, race, education, TFAM tenure, workshop usefulness). Findings revealed that women, Black respondents, and those without graduate degrees benefited more from the workshop than did their counterparts. Results were mixed for respondents with varying levels of tenure within TFAM and for those who found the workshop most useful.

Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusions

This chapter interprets and describes findings in light of the interview (see chapter 2), the methods (see chapter 3), and results (see chapter 4). It serves as an intellectual synthesis of what has been done (previous research), what is being done (this dissertation), and what needs to be done (future research). To that end, this chapter ends with the research's limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research and program development.

Chapter 6: Ministerial Competencies

This chapter delineates the procedures employed and assessments provided around my ministerial competencies. For reasons delineated at the beginning of the chapter, it was clear that this committee's job was to assess me and not my project. Therefore, I felt it had to be people who knew me both personally and professionally for at least 10 years, as well as had expertise in ministry and/or the academy. Given that criteria, five people were agreed upon: Rev. Dr. Lynn Sexton; Bishop Tonyia Rawls; Rev. Mark Fowler; Dr. Nicole Lucas, Phd; and Dr. Joe Lott, Phd.

Chapter 2 – Lessons Learned from the Activist Leader (Bishop Yvette Flunder)

Introduction and Summary

This chapter contains three major parts. The first part includes edited transcripts from a series of zoom calls held between Dr. Juan Battle and Bishop Yvette Flunder during the spring and summer of 2022. At the request of NYTS, I was told to conduct further interviews that interrogated more of her personal journey and insights. Thus, another lengthy interview was conducted in December of 2022; and that comprises with second major part of this chapter. Finally, to offer even more insight to sections one and two of this chapter, Bishop Flunder provided a document delineating the history of her foundation and the work it's done. That document comprises the third part of this chapter.

As Juan shared early in the conversation, he wanted to engage in the forensics of the Bishop's activism and leadership. To that end, He was not as interested in what she had done; that he already knew. Instead, he was more interested in the "why" and the "how" of it.

The topics covered during these interviews were wide ranging, sometimes light, sometimes deep, but always meaningful.

Since Flunder's early work focused on HIV activism in the Bay area, that is where the interview began. From there, the conversation migrated to her HIV work in Africa and other

parts of the world. Her early leadership concerning below market income housing and senior housing was also covered. While several parts of the interview interrogated her frustrations, one poignant observation merits mention here. Flunder stated:

> [she] was a part of a denomination that was very focused on getting people saved, you understand, and getting them ready to go to heaven. But not too deeply involved in helping them to live better on earth. And that was a great frustration to me.

We spent even more time discussing her transition from San Francisco (at the Love Center) to starting her own ministry (at the City of Refuge). Flunder stated:

> What prompted me to start the City of Refuge was, I felt that there was a need to have a presence in San Francisco. it was the belly of the beast you know. But also because my focus of responding to HIV in some other social justice issues was not as strong a focus for my pastor in the congregation at the Love Center. I'm not angry with them, because their greatest passion was for Gospel music, which blesses all of us. But although I was involved and engaged in Gospel music, my deepest passion was for social justice and for the dispossessed.

She spoke about the frustrations of starting the ministry, as well as the frustrations of grantsmanship. When asked about lessons learned from years of acquiring and running grants, Flunder shared:

> As I have said many times, when I'm talking to people about funding, when you see a funding possibility and you write for it, the main thing you want to really know is that what you get is not money. People say, well, I got a $200,000 grant. I got a $400,000

> grant. Know that what you got was a way by which you can perform the duties that the grant says that you must perform.
>
> And you're compensated for that, and that only. If you ever step out of those boundaries and use those funds for something else, you are not going to be able to give them the deliverables that go along with that. Okay, and that's going to create a nightmare for you. You will forever be catching up. The other thing that I learned and I taught many, many people over the years is, you have to raise some money in order to house or facilitate a grant.
>
> Grants don't pay for everything that the grants are requiring you to do, especially the indirect.
>
> So if you have a grant, you got $300,000, $400,000, or even half a million dollars in a grant, you also are going to have to do the fiscal reckoning. You have the deliverables and the need to report on those constantly. And the person who is going to do that, as far as the grant is concerned, is somebody who they're not really going to pay for. They're going to give you a small percentage, you understand, for indirect. But that person could cost your agency, you know $30 to $40,000 a year; which, between audits and/or fiscal responsibilities …. and if you only have that one grant, somebody is gonna have to work for free.

We also discussed why she felt more people don't work at getting grants. Flunder felt it imperative that more culturally appropriate workshops and trainings be conducted to "demystify" the grant process. The interview also covered what (Flunder felt) seminaries, churches, and

corporations should be doing to get more grants into vulnerable communities generally and communities of color more specifically.

The conversation then turned to the Covid pandemic and its impact on church operations and attendance. In short, she felt things will never go back to how they were … "and that's not necessarily a bad thing." She repeated several times the importance for churches to become and/or remain relevant. As a matter of fact, at one point in the interview Flunder stated that:

> If you don't write about anything else, encourage people to stop essentially spending a whole bunch of money on cathedrals. Try to find a building where one fourth of it may be usable as a meeting space. The other three fourths of it needs to be usable for something that will bring income.

She offered how space at City of Refuge was multipurpose, such that Church could be held on Sundays and the space generate income during the week.

The last part of the interview was reserved for Flunder to speak on any topic she felt important for the church to be thinking about. Here, she clearly felt the importance of better listening to and involving young people.

> Essentially, and I think that we have to be able to embrace their ideas and stop treating them like the youth department – as though their whole role is to embrace our ideas. We need to hear from them because they are learning at a different learning tree than most of us … And I'm saying that, because what they are creating is an understanding of God that is much less ceremonial and much more portable.

She elaborated on the hypocrisies within the church, regarding how it treated or has treated the LGBTQ community, concerns about child molestation in the Catholic church, and more.

Part I. The First Set of Interviews

[All of the text below in **bold** was added by Juan Battle to highlight what he felt was particularly poignant.]

Juan Battle:

I want to welcome you and let you know that the conversation we're about to have will serve as the bulk of chapter 2 of my dissertation.

This, as you know, is the leadership cohort. What we've been tasked with is to find a leader/activist; and I found you.

I want to engage in what I'm calling the forensics of your activism and leadership. To that end, I'm not as interested in what you've done; that I know. I'm more interested in the "why" and the "how" of it.

And so I would like you to start where ever you'd like, but I would actually like to start when I first heard about you. That was in the AIDS activist era with you in the Bay area. There were others who weren't doing anything, and you could have easily joined them and just kept singing, but you chose not to. Talk me through that season, if you will.

Juan Battle:

How did attitudes about AIDS change over time?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, I got involved in HIV and AIDS when it wasn't even called HIV and AIDS, it was called GRID – gay related immunodeficiency. I got involved because it appeared that there was this incredible virus illness … sickness … plague. We didn't know what it was but it seemed to be affecting gay men in and around the Black church, particularly in the arts.

There were a number of gay men always in in the Black church as far back as I can remember. Groups of active gay men were in and around the Church, and the Church did not have a toxic relationship with the gay men. They had the musicians, choir directors, and folks who worked in the kitchen, on the boards, etc. And they call them things like “sweet,” “kind of sweet,” “got a lot of sugar in their water,” or something like that. You know it was always, but everyone was aware that that reality existed.

So, when the virus became prevalent in that community, I was already engaged to some degree in Gospel music. This is before I got connected with the Hawkins family. I come from a singing family, and singing is a rich part of my family. For example, my father was a jazz and blues singer. So, of course, I would be concerned why this community was being disproportionately affected by a virus and a disease.

This is what I would call pre-stigma, it was just something that needed to be done, we needed to address it. However, over time, it was consumed by the Church; particularly in conservative churches and anti-gay churches. It became an opportunity to diminish.

These are my years walking close with Sylvester who was also in the Church of Christ, just like me, and we were very good friends. I facilitated his funeral service. But all of a sudden people were saying that this was the wrath of God against the gay community directed specifically toward the gay community period.

And so, all of that made a lot of people take their hands off of it. I saw people take their hands off of giving care to their own children.

Because of their fear of transmission, but also because, again, it was the wrath of God. So many Christians felt there was just nothing that could be done. If these people didn't turn and give their lives to God and give up being gay, they were going to die and that's it.

Because of theological prejudice and, in many ways government prejudice, there was not any real money being put toward it. There was no money put toward it; they just turned their back and let the virus proliferate. It is still a pandemic, for that reason. It continues to be a pandemic for that reason, which is sad but true reality.

And so I got involved and engaged in it, and I might also say that those of us who got involved and engaged with it with our hands in it, and in the very beginning, included a lot of women. There weren't a lot of men up close in the early years.

That didn't come to later because it was something that a lot of the guys tried to get as far away from this as possible, because they felt incredibly vulnerable.

But it also brought the light on in many a closet. Because you could have it only for a while, before you started looking like you had it; if you understand what it means. And so that was that, another sad part of it.

And I would also probably need to add that one of my missions was letting people know that this was an equal opportunity virus. It didn't care if you were a child, a young woman. It didn't care if you were gay or straight. It had everything to do with transmission modes.

Juan Battle:

How did your work overseas begin and evolve?

I also started very early going back and forth, to the continent of Africa. This is even before the end of apartheid, to have these conversations. I got some money through the Gates Foundation and did an enormous amount of work in Zimbabwe and South Africa, trying to get people to understand that this is not an angry God.

But when I was in South Africa, it wasn't about gay, because the majority of the people who are involved and engaged in sexual activity – that continue to expand the spread of HIV – were not gay people. What we were dealing with there had an enormous amount to do with prostitution and with women. Women who were a part of the brothels that surrounded the places where men were working in the mines and in labor camps. These men had to be away from their wives and

children, sometimes for three or four months at a time. The brothels that were around those encampments where they were working were where prostitutes were.

And once the virus got loose in their population, it began to grow and expand exponentially. We served that population in terms of getting them tested and getting them in care for several years. And we still do. By the way, we just got to doing work in Uganda. A big testing of over 1,000 people. There is still a large number of new cases of HIV.

So that's sort of the panoramic picture. And there are lots of things in between: lots of different policies, lots of different demands, lots of different work with the government, lots of laying down in caskets, and stopping traffic on the freeway, working with Helene Gayle and getting the Minority AIDS Initiative funded. There was a lot that I can say, politically, all the way through to being the speaker at the White House for World AIDS Day

Juan Battle:

What got you into activism in the first place? Was that your entree into it?

Yvette Flunder:

I would say that I had already in some ways walked through the water of being concerned about disproportionate food insecurity.

In our neighborhoods, I was involved with seniors, helping to provide housing. I have managed below market income housing and senior housing in the inner city of San Francisco for a number of years.

I've always had a heart for the people most marginalized and disadvantaged. And I think that's what happened to me theologically. I could not understand why these issues will not have great support and great importance to us as people of faith.

I was a part of a denomination that was very focused on getting people saved, you understand, and getting them ready to go to heaven. But not too deeply involved in helping them to live better on earth. And that was a great frustration to me.

I don't know exactly where my mind and heart for social justice came from, but I can tell you that from the time I was a little bit of a girl, when you know I saw a bird fall out of the nest once. A little one, before it was ready to fly and I took it home. That's as far back as I can remember. And I tried to help it. I've done it with kittens and puppies; and eventually, with homo sapiens. But I have an inclination. I believe that I was born with it.

Juan Battle:

What year did you start your church?

Yvette Flunder:

30 years from last year. we can do the math.

Juan Battle:

Okay, and so what led to that moment.

Yvette Flunder:

Well. I hadn't done the work of AIDS before I left Love Center. I left love Center because I felt called to San Francisco and to the work there.

I made an effort to have an aids ministry that we could co facilitate, with Walter Hawkins as the lead. But we disagreed on some fundamental issues.

So I began with Bishop Hawkins in Oakland for 10 years and then 30 more years at the City of Refuge.

Juan Battle:

So in 1991 what prompted you to start the City of Refuge.

Yvette Flunder:

What prompted me to start the City of Refuge was, I felt that there was a need to have a presence in San Francisco. It was the belly of the beast you know. But also because my focus of responding to HIV in some other social justice issues was not as strong a focus for my pastor in the congregation at the Love Center. I'm not angry with them, because their greatest passion was for Gospel music, which blesses all of us. But although I was involved and engaged in Gospel music, my deepest passion was for social justice and for the dispossessed.

Juan Battle:

How was it starting that church? Was it seen like you're betraying them or was it an easy partnership? talk me through that season.

Yvette Flunder:

There was a struggle. You know, there was a concern about who was going to go with me, you know if anyone was and, by the way, they were only about maybe four people. Apart from my family who were previously Love Center members. So we did not lead the people away, you understand what I mean. There was some concern about that.

We also had some issues about who was going to receive the grants, because we were doing the lion's share of the work at that point. And so I had to negotiate with the county. And they took the grants that we had to do the work and divided them in half. So some things could happen in Oakland through Love Center and other things could happen through City of Refuge.

Then years later, we moved to Oakland, long after the Love Center disengaged from doing that work.

Juan Battle:

Okay, so since you mentioned the word grants let's go to that a little bit, which as you know, is the thrust of my dissertation. I want to talk, if you will, about the importance (or not) of wealth acquisition and social justice work, whether it's AIDS or housing for the elderly or whatever.

Yvette Flunder:

All of us got federal money for the most part, I was you know, one of those activists that went to the CDC [Center for Disease Control] and SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] and HRSA [Health Resources and Services Administration], and all of the other people who did work funding HIV and AIDS and demanded funds be distributed or made available to people of color. Whites really did know how to get that money. But they focus, a lot of that money on their communities and not on communities of color. We have specific kinds of needs, and we have specific ways in which people have to be approached.

Especially around AIDS, you know and there's no one that really can do it, except those of us that know the language and the way of the Black community.

But we fought the good fight of faith. And found out a lot of things about what it means to have a grant.

Juan Battle:

What were some of the lessons learned from acquiring and managing funding?

Yvette Flunder:

As I have said many times, when I'm talking to people about funding, when you see a funding possibility and you write for it, the main thing you want to really know is that what you get is not money. People say, well, I got a $200,000 grant. I got a $400,000 grant. Know that what you got was a way by which you can perform the duties that the grant says that you must perform.

And you're compensated for that, and that only. If you ever step out of those boundaries and use those funds for something else, you are not going to be able to give them the deliverables that go along with that. Okay, and that's going to create a nightmare for you. You will forever be catching up. The other thing that I learned and I taught many, many people over the years is, you have to raise some money in order to house or facilitate a grant.

Grants don't pay for everything that the grants are requiring you to do, especially the indirect.

So if you have a grant, you got $300,000, $400,000, or even half a million dollars in a grant, you also are going to have to do the fiscal reckoning. You have the deliverables and the need to report on those constantly. And the person who is going to do that, as far as the grant is concerned, is somebody who they're not really going to pay for. They're going to give you a small percentage, you understand, for indirect. But that person could cost your agency, you know $30 to $40,000 a year; which, between audits and/or fiscal responsibilities …. and if you only have that one grant, somebody is gonna have to work for free.

When we realize that when we get money, we have to pay to have the money, it also begins to be fruitful. There needs to be enough grants so that there's enough indirect to have the staff that's necessary to facilitate the grants. That was not easy to teach people who thought that when they got $100,000, they actually had $100,000; and they immediately misuse the money. And when you immediately misuse it, you spend the whole rest of your time trying to catch up.

This was the thing that killed a whole lot of nonprofits in the early years.

Juan Battle:

But I'm curious about something, why do you think more organizations don't focus on grant acquisition and instead they just intend to do the work pro bono.

Yvette Flunder:

Well, some of them because they don't know you know that the RFP can be very daunting; a lot of times people don't know that. They don't know the world of RFP, you know. They don't know the world of grants. They don't know the world, that government grants versus private foundations; you know how different they can be.

It's very binary and a lot of people don't know that. And by that, when I say binary you have one group of people who are putting money out because our tax dollars said that we're going to do certain things, right. Our tax dollars are supposed to do certain things and the federal government, state government, the city government are not going to do those things. They're going to give those grants to people who will do those things. They must have one kind of regulation, right?

Then you have this whole other world of people who have way too much money, and they have to pay personal taxes on this too much money that they have. And so they try to find some organization that echoes to some degree what their concerns are, or they develop some sort of nonprofit of their own, just to do that thing. Funding the things that are close to their heart. That’s the Warren Buffetts of the world.

So you can hardly get into where they are, but they're very clear about what they're going to fund and what they're not. You know that's Tesla and all of the tech people. So it's a matter of both learning to work with government money and learning how to schmooze because you have to have some specialization right.

People who are private funders, their institutional organization needs to get a tax advantage by giving some money away. Even someone like pharmaceuticals, like Gilead. They make a killing off the medicine that they make, they also have to pay taxes So they have a need to find organizations that do the things that are close to their heart and they give them money from their income.

I put it into categories. It's either governmental – there are certain things you have to do. Or it's private – it’s got to be smooched. If it's governmental, then you have to be able to write and say to them what they want to hear. I mean taking up all your time if you're doing it right. To be honest, private money is not really in my current reality.

But you know we do take governmental grants from time to time. Any emergencies like this pandemic that we're in, with suddenly having housing and food insecure people surrounding us everywhere in the inner city.

And the president, Biden, put aside the emergency care act, to respond to that. But we had to jump right on some of that because we’ve got a lot of poor people hungry for people to respond.

That’s a part of our inner city, you know the third world of the United States, as I call it, the inner-city response. But when it's emergency money, sometimes it has less drama associated with it.

Juan Battle:

So thinking in terms of TFAM, for example, what do you think can be done to make people more aware, as well as desire to engage in grantsmanship?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, I would think that first of all, you have to have workshops that speak to Black people and speak Church. I think they were brilliant people around all of us. But because you are brilliant you know, does not mean that you can sail a boat. It does not mean that you know how to trim the tree. The same way, we got into tennis, golfing, and basketball. Somebody who bridged what at one time was an all-white thing.

When we found out that it had been kept from us, like it was something that we weren't capable of. You need people who can demystify it. Sometimes some of us who know how to demystify this are somewhat reticent about teaching other people how to demystify it because it [having the knowledge] makes us of extreme importance in our own community, because we can do this, I think we have to release knowledge and release the opportunities.

I'll say it again, that when you get money doesn't mean you got money. What you have is a task and the task has to supersede doing anything with that money that is problematic.

That's an important thing to teach people who have either not had the opportunity to really handle large sums of money or have a history of not handling it well.

Juan Battle:

So you mentioned “how to” workshops. talk about that, what do you mean?

Yvette Flunder:

Basically, to teach people much of what it is I've just shared with you. Demystify grant writing. Teach people how to run organizations that depend on grants; so that when money gets to our neighborhood, half of it is not already gone.

Some folks who really know how to do it, they tie this down before we even know that is available. That's very important.

Juan Battle:

So prescriptively, what should be done at seminaries?

Yvette Flunder:

I am of the opinion that theological institutions need to marry practical things to their degree programs. Something like grant writing should be married to a DMin or MDiv. Working with people who use substances or nonprofit law. I think that there should be a relationship between the liberal schools and the theological schools.

A number of classes that you can take based on what your vision is; and grant writing should be a part of that. We probably would not call it grant writing, but it would be the science of funding.

Juan Battle:

And what about churches, what should they be doing?

Yvette Flunder:

How do you fund? Because it can't keep having thousand-dollar lines at the church right? We just can't keep doing that. Our people are not rich like that; some of them are, but most of them are not.

And we can't keep having schemes. We have got to figure out a way to put our tax dollars at work, because we pay the Federal Government to have this money to lead into our community.

Juan Battle:

And what about corporations, what should they be doing?

Yvette Flunder:

It's ours, but we don't know how to get it. And I think that one of the greatest realities of reparation is to get the money that comes from these major corporations and put it back in our community. They get to ease their tax burden. But it is also our burden in terms of providing services and its communities. It is fair and it is right, that our community should be favored in the way those funds have been distributed.

Well, back to seminaries, we have to know how to get at it, and I think that the theological schools, if they are really going to last, they're going to have to have something that comes from a liberal arts [perspective], so that those things can cross pollinate.

I got my doctorate ministry degree from San Francisco Theological, which is now connected to the University of Redlands. They become one school, the way that Andover Newton and Yale became one school. The beauty of that is this cross pollination that I'm talking about right now.

Take some theological courses as well as practical courses, so that when you get out of there, you won't just be talking about Jesus and the Holy Ghost. What you'll be doing is also knowing how to work the systems that exist in this country to do the work of justice among our people.

Juan Battle:

A topic that has come up several times in seminary is how will churches thrive or survive post Covid. One speaker said it very succinctly: you will not exist if you are not relevant. And he said that relevancy has to exist beyond "Jesus Jesus Jesus."

Yvette Flunder:

Period. And the people not coming back. That's the thing and I need people to really understand that they have found another way to exist, that you can go to church virtually.

Because of the pandemic, they've learned a different way to work. They used to be ok with going to work in the dark and coming home in the dark, Monday through Friday. Now that's no longer acceptable.

Further, they used to be ok with spending hours on Sunday in church. by and large. That too is no longer acceptable. They figured out, they could go to church virtual. That you can go to in your pajamas and be there for an hour or two. And then, then you can take your family to the park, you can go to the mall, you can go golfing.

I have the strong feeling that it's just never going to be like it was. I don't see it happening anymore, in that way. The people with the smaller churches are the ones that will likely survive. The people with the larger churches that require 1,000 people or more, who have to be in the pews and giving in order for them to pay their bills. I just think that the whole concept has been changed by this virus.

Think about it this way. It's like you are going to the concert, right? You're going to go to the concert; you don't just go to the concert. You buy a ticket to go to the concert. You buy an outfit to go to the concert. You get your hair done to go to the concert, because you go to the concert.

So Church is a gathering, but it is also any event. It is literally any event. And it is an event that people pay to experience. Now, they don't charge you a ticket at the door. But there is an expectation and some charges. If your name is on the role and nothing ever comes up dollar signs next to your name, there's a query that goes out.

This part of what we are – the entertainment of the Church – is also the coming of the community to see what you have on, what you wear, what you drive up in, what is your spouse wearing, what are your kids doing in the community?

And the bigger the building, the larger the congregation; and the larger the footprint of what they have, the greater need that they have to support it.

So if nobody came back to church? In City of Refuge, we have 31,000 square feet of space here. If nobody decided they weren't gonna come, we were going to do it virtually. We have what we call a hybrid service of in-person service once a month. People are giving online much the same as the way they did in person.

But now they're giving from all over the country. Sunday our scripture was read by our people in Great Britain. We got some people in Germany, we got some people in Africa. And they all can give electronically. And do in fact; that congregation grew during Covid, but they're all over the world.

This is this way of worship that enables us to have people all over the world, but that's not the real part of it. So I don't want to diminish it. I'm grateful because it fills the gaps of having to meet in person. But the other part of it is that we acquired a building that is not church specific.

If you don't write about anything else, encourage people to stop essentially spending a whole bunch of money on cathedrals. Try to find a building where one fourth of it may be usable as a meeting space. The other three fourths of it needs to be usable for something that will bring income.

I have the roofers union. The AFL CIO has two spaces, offices that they leased from us. So does Faith in Action, which is a significant organization for justice. We have a full gym, with exercise machines, weights, and heavy balls.

We have a full commercial kitchen built out with money because we have a food program there that can feed as many as 3,000 people in a month.

All of those things take up a lot of space.

But we also have a sanctuary that can seat 600 people. But it's all vanilla out. if you understand. It doesn't speak to you and tell you that it's a church. It has a wood floor, it has a movable platform that we use as a pulpit.

No signs on the wall, paintings on the wall, or anything to indicate that this room can only be used as a church.

We can lease it out and it has also been a money maker.

We don't have to have a mega congregation. So all the bills are paid before the people give. So when the people give, it only enhances our outreach.

What is church? It is basically a private social club for people to gather together who all believe the same thing and come to constantly reinforce that in worship and sacrament.

Then, they build a building that honors that you follow me. But what I'm trying to say is that I think the time for that has come and gone. Massive Catholic churches are boarded up and empty in cities like San Francisco.

I know two of them. One of them's way down close to Fisherman's Wharf, one of the most beautiful Catholic churches, but you can't do nothing else in there.

And when all the losses started coming from the engagement of the priests with young people and with some of the nuns, but to with young boys, in particular, the congregations fell off.

And the Catholic Church can't sell the doggone things. Who wants that with a bunch of people buried under the floor and everything is so Gothic looking. What you do with that?

Because it's a single-use building. If I could say anything to my colleagues who are going to get a building, I would say get yourself something that is a box and then you make the box what you want it to be. Don't get something that says church as soon as you look at it, because immediately, you have hindered yourself.

And if you get something that looks like a church, first thing is unscrew the pews from the floor, put down some carpet, and take that building and turn it into something that can serve the community in some way.

What I say is that we need to act like we have a building of glass windows, all the way around where we can fully see into the world and the world can fully see into the Church. No secret societies.

We are sent to the world. We are not sent to have private meetings. Go to the upper room Jesus said, be endowed with power, then come down the stairs, and get among the people.

Serve the people. We can't serve the people in a locked up upper room upstairs. Go into all the world. All the world is everywhere. We're called to put our hands on every wicked thing and every beautiful thing.

You get involved and engaged in that way, we need to buy our buildings like that, then what you can do is you can have enterprises, fundraisers, grants, offer service. We got a testing van right outside the door by building.

Right there on the parking lot, people can be tested. Of course, we do. Because that's the way it is. Church is one of the things in the building.

I've taught many times and I continue to teach that the Church is not a pyramid – a top down pyramid, where the very top is the pastors, then the associate pastors, then the ministers, and then the deacons, and the mothers board … and then the community.

I think churches should be a wagon. And a wagon wheel where all the spokes are equidistant between the center and the rim No spoke is larger or greater.

One of those spokes is the worship experience, which I love; but that's just one spoke. The other spokes are as your community needs or demands it. The hungry, the mentally and emotionally challenged, the housing insecure, the seniors, the food insecure. All of those are ministries that's the heart of Jesus, and they should be equally as important as our worship experience and we have to build and or use buildings that will allow us to do all of those things.

And I feel the same way, even about leadership. I think there should be two or three pastors, each with their own specialties. That specialty is other than preaching and teaching. That's why I think there should be dual degrees.

You can be a pastor and a social worker, pastor and legal advisor, a pastor who understands childhood trauma, and work your other job.

And then don’t have a full pastor salary for one person; but take a salary and divide it up in stipends; pass it around and give it to some of all the pastors.

So that it doesn't fall to one person to know everything. Use the people in the Church, who have skills and can help. And when we put them all together, we have what we need to really take care of people. That's logical to me.

Juan Battle:

Do you have that model at City of Refuge?

Yvette Flunder:

We have what's called the shepherd's table. And on the shepherd's table, you know we have a grant writer, of course, right. We have someone who works in the theological institution. We have people who are specifically connected to food insecurity and helping people receive food. We have an elder care person.

All of them have finished theological education, at least at the baccalaureate level; and most of them at the master's level.

And we call ourselves the shepherd's table.

Juan Battle:

What do you think I should be thinking about that I haven't been.

Yvette Flunder:

Well, I think I probably would say, there needs to be some real focus on what this time that we're in is doing to the understandings of faith for young people. Because you know I think the great reality for the conservative church is that their kids don't like them and don't like what they're doing. Therefore, they are leaving in droves.

You saw it in the Black Lives Matter movement. It was the first time I've ever seen that many white kids walking with young people of color in my whole life; and I've lived long enough to see a lot. But this is an amazing time. The ways in which those starting to work together around

the shootings at their schools, the ways in which young people engaged and involved in the environment.

I think that we have an obligation to them, but I think that they are fired up.

Essentially, and I think that we have to be able to embrace their ideas and stop treating them like the youth department – as though their whole role is to embrace our ideas. We need to hear from them because they are learning at a different learning tree than most of us.

And they're powerful and they are deeply relational. Deeply spiritual but not deeply religious. And that's where I think we need to really be putting our energy. I have just about decided that the generation that I am in is fundamentally useless.

That’s not everybody, of course. But for a lot of older people, they just don't have the energy for the fight and some of them just reached a point where they can't do anything that is different. It's late in the game and they got arthritis, you know what I mean.

But there are some young people coming along and they are doing some incredible work out there. I think that we need to listen more closely; and help them to do and to fund and to actualize.

They’re changing religion altogether. Many of them have hearts that are filled with faith. It's just not the kind of realities that most of us have been exposed to.

Juan Battle:

They're changing religion altogether, what do you mean?

Yvette Flunder:

They're making it much more relational. Remember I talked about a room, a church having clear windows, where you can see out, and you can see in.

Church and communion have traditionally had a bunch of rules. Cracker you know, sometimes it's real one, sometimes it's grape juice, sometimes it's cheap grape juice. And you had certain people who couldn't handle or touch the communion. It was really quite something. Depends upon what church you come from.

But this gives a concern. Why can't communion be a cookie and a Starbucks coffee? And they're right, why can't it be?

And I'm saying that, because what they are creating is an understanding of God that is much less ceremonial and much more portable.

It's the Church, looking at the world through a wide open glass window. And the world looking at the Church. It's a coming together and an end to secret societies.

Sylvester told me on his deathbed when we were talking and we were working out the end of his life. And he said to me that one of the hardest things for me to do was to come back to Church. He came back to the Love Center; and was a member there before he died.

And he said, because the people who turned me out were the ones who turned me out.

I'll never forget that. And I know he's telling the truth. I know it was telling the truth, because I saw it happen.

How is it that the Catholic Church is all crazy about being pro life right and anti-abortion, like we don't remember and don't realize how many young people were sexually abused by this Church? How do you completely dismiss that and tell me that you're caring about ending abortion?

Because they really don't think that they crossed the line having these boys. They don't think … there's something in their minds that makes it okay.

First time in the history of the Catholic Church that we have a seated Pope and the living predecessor. It has never happened before. You got a Pope living in a little house behind the Vatican back there, who is still alive; and another Pope that was anointed … for Peter's throne as they call it.

You are supposed to die off Peter's throne; and somebody else is supposed to get it, right? How do you un-Pope the Pope? They had to do it because he was so deeply entrenched in this wanton sexual crap. And the priests that were doing it … the priests that were involved in it, he was always finding a way to pardon them.

And he's still alive. Benedict is not dead. But he got quiet. It's never happened before, and so, so the whatever the Catholic Church's voice is about abortion to me is useless. What the hell? What really, what do you have to say about it for real?

Or about gay people, what do you have to say? That's the frustration of religion that these young people have. And just what I said to you just now is what they say to each other for sure.

Why, why would anybody want to be a part of that?

And you want to be a part, all up in it, money and politics? Sit down. You're not in a position even have a voice around this. Look at your own history and your present. You want to condemn the Boy Scouts? You are the Boy Scouts for heaven's sake.

So it is that kind of dissonance … these kids are not crazy. They understand. We all hate the war in Ukraine; but we have taken over other countries and islands. We are blood guilty. This country is blood guilty. We are the end result of bloodletting conquerors, who all believe in the concept of manifest destiny – if I got the gun and you got the knife, God intends for me to run your life period.

That's it and that's all. So, we're not even in a position to condemn, unless we repent … you follow me? It's a sad truth, but it is the truth.

So that's kind of where my heart is. It is around my anticipation of young people coming along and helping us to get on this.

Juan Battle:
I am going to thank you. I want to honor your time.

Part II. December 2022 Interview

Juan Battle:

If I may, just to keep as close to the instructions I was given, what I'm more interested in is less about the organization and more about you. Specifically more about you in your journey, your ministry, your and "biographical sketch". So let's jump into the outline that I have here, and we will take it from there.

Yvette Flunder:

Okay

Juan Battle:

Just so you know, I use what I call the Studs Terkel model. Have you ever heard of the Studs Terkel model?

Yvette Flunder:

No.

Juan Battle:

Studs Terkel is one of my favorite interviewers ever. He's written many books. His interviews are still sometimes played on NPR, even though he's been deceased for quite a while. He interviews everyone from ministers, to presidents, to coal miners. He has this certain style of what he does, and I think it's absolutely brilliant. So to that end, we will start with the first question:

What is your father's name?

Yvette Flunder:

My birth father's name is John Connor.

Juan Battle:

Do you know where he was born?

Yvette Flunder:

He was born in Berkeley, California.

Juan Battle:

What about your mother's name?

Yvette Flunder:

Her name is Ruth Ella Langston, Langston is her married name.

Juan Battle:

Where was she born?

Yvette Flunder:

She was born in Fort Worth, Texas.

Juan Battle:

How did your parents meet?

Yvette Flunder:

At church.

Juan Battle:

Of course they met at church. (laughs)

Yvette Flunder:

That’s the truth! (laughs)

Juan Battle:

How did someone from California bump into somebody from Texas at church?

Yvette Flunder:

They met because they were in the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) together. My grandfather was the Bishop of COGIC, on the San Francisco side. My father's father was a founding pastor of Ephesians COGIC on the Berkeley side. They went to church stuff, did everything related to COGIC. All the families were connected in some way.

Juan Battle:

To COGIC?

Yvette Flunder:

Yeah they all knew each other from the church, the families intermarried.

Juan Battle:

Oh really?

Yvette Flunder:

My mother and father, we're both part of COGIC, and they got married to one another.

Juan Battle:

Okay, so what year were you born?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, I was born in 1955.

Juan Battle:

Where?

Yvette Flunder:

I was born in San Francisco at Mount Zion Hospital.

Juan Battle:

Was all of your primary education in San Francisco?

Yvette Flunder:

Yes.

Juan Battle:

What year did you graduate from high school?

Yvette Flunder:

I graduated high school in Lexington, Mississippi.

Juan Battle:

Oh, and how did you find your way to Mississippi?

Yvette Flunder:

I went to elementary school and junior high in the South San Francisco area. My folks bought a house out there, and then I went to Lexington, Mississippi, to a COGIC school. That school was called Saints Academy and Junior College in Lexington, and that's where I graduated high school.

Juan Battle:

Who did you live with when you went to school in Mississippi?

Yvette Flunder:

I lived in a dorm.

Juan Battle:

So this is like a boarding school for high school kids?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, they had high school and junior college. They had elementary school too, but those kids were all local.

Juan Battle:

You graduated high school in Mississippi, and where did you go after?

Yvette Flunder:

When I left Mississippi, I came back to California. I did my first stint in college, and my focus was on accounting. It was money, fiscal stuff. One of the smartest things I ever did. My intention was to be an accountant, but I went from that to theological education in terms of my next

forway into tertiary education. I was cajoled into it because I was already pastoring by the time I went to theological school. As a pentecostal, I didn't see any reason to go to theological school, you just read the Bible.

Juan Battle:

Okay, I want to stick a pin there because we jumped ahead. Let's go back, if you would, to Mississippi. What was it like being at that school? Did you want to go to that school?

Yvette Flunder:

I absolutely wanted to go. I was a church going, Christ Kid, and I loved the idea of you know prayer in the morning, prayer at noon, prayer in the evening. I was a leader almost immediately after I got there, both in my dormitory and in the worship experience. I enjoyed it, it was sort of a cloistered life. I've always had what I would consider, intimacy with the divine, so it was wonderful for me and leadership opportunities. Dr. Irania Cornelia Mallory – who was the head of the school – saw something in me, and kept me in places of leadership. She also kept me in check, so that I remain humble and obedient. The things that she felt were necessary for me in her regard, and I traveled with her all over the United States, and particularly in the COGIC spots and places

Juan Battle:

While you're in high school you're traveling all over the country with the head of the school ?

Yvette Flunder:

I went with her. I was still going to school and I took my homework with me. I come from a strong COGIC background in my family. My grandfather, Bishop E.E. Hamilton was on the

general board for COGIC during that time. My mother's father and my uncle, after my grandfather died, Bishop W. W. Hamilton was also on the general board. So my lineage It's pretty deep in COGIC.

Juan Battle:

Yes, clearly. So when you graduated from high school, you went back to San Francisco and you started college where?

Yvette Flunder:

That was when I went to do the work on accounting at San Mateo County Junior College, then I did go on and finish that undergraduate degree in accounting. **I always had a thing for numbers. The numbers of things are always floating around in the back of my head, I still have that in fact, honest to God. If I didn't have that skill, I don't know what I would have done. I needed that as much as I did the Bible, believe me.**

To be able to know how to manage money, that was something I was not aware how important it is. In fact it is a gift and a skill. It is especially when you are called to something that denominations will not support. That's important for me to say. I had to find funding outside of church, because I went right from that to knee deep into the early years of the HIV epidemic. Which would have been almost 40 years ago. I had to do a lot of grant writing just to get funds to care for people of African descent who are living with HIV. This also led me to do education around HIV in the cloister in the church. Then I decided to further my education.

Juan Battle:

So you went to San Mateo Junior College, majoring in accounting. You graduated from San Mateo then what did you do immediately after graduating? Did you go to work?

Yvette Flunder:

After I did that I went to work and started building a nonprofit.

Juan Battle:

What nonprofit did you start building?

Yvette Flunder:

It was called the Arc of Love.

Yvette Flunder:

That was our first nonprofit.

Juan Battle:

What year was that?

Yvette Flunder:

It is all in the document I sent you, our history. It's extensive. If you look at the document, you can see that it's a lot, and it has a few times and locations and places in terms of how we went from one thing to another. That document will remember better than I will, believe me. It contains about 30-40 years of work. [That document is included at the end of this interview.]

Juan Battle:

So you begin Arc of Love with an associate degree from San Mateo.

Yvette Flunder:

Yes, Arc of Love was the first. It became Arc of Refuge when I left the Love Center to pastor City of Refuge. So it was Arc of Love at first, because that was where I was working closely with Bishop Hawkins to determine how we could respond to the expanding needs of the HIV community. When I left to start City of Refuge, we changed the name from Arc of Love to Arc of Refuge.

Juan Battle:

So Love Center and Hawkins, they were located in what part of California?

Yvette Flunder:

Oakland.

Juan Battle:

Then you went to start your church in San Francisco right?

Yvette Flunder:

I was with Bishop Hawkins for 10 years as his associate pastor and then I left and went to San Francisco, founded City of Refuge in the Arc of Refuge.

Juan Battle:

At some point you said you decided you wanted more schooling, when was that during this journey?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, it was when I understood that I needed to polish my theological skills. As I said, as a pentecostal, you just don't think you need to do that. You just read the Bible, and as a song we used to sing “the Bible is right and someone is wrong.” It was a very active song in the pentecostal church.

Juan Battle:

I am sure, I know that song.

Yvette Flunder:

I really realized that I was bereft of a theological background that would enable me to understand not only that history and the place of religion, but also the history and the realities of the Bible itself. **Through church history, we have both the bane and blessing of religion, as it relates to politics. This was also my focus when I went to the seminary was to spend a significant amount of time on how we, as people of faith, treat other people. When is religion a bludgeon? When is religion helpful? What is the difference?** And I sort of have been in that place for a lot of years, you know, so I knew it was a bludgeon.

In many cases, I knew that it was a blessing. But it had everything to do with finding some way to talk about the things of the divine without destroying people in order for my concepts and ideas to win. It's such a history, a bloody, painful history of religion. **If I can believe that God is on my side, I can kill you and stand over your body while you're dying. I can do this if I can convince myself that I am doing God a service. We've seen that happen many, many times in the history of religion. For me it had everything to do for me with ethics and with what I**

call the Prima Facie Duties, to do no harm. But what does it mean really to be a religious person who is focused on doing no harm?

That was when my heart was. So when I did the master's degree at Civic School of Religion it was focused on ethics. When I left, I went to San Francisco Theological Seminary, which was the UCC and methodist school. San Francisco Theological Seminary, in Marin County, was a methodist seminary and Presbyterian. In fact, I think it was more Presbyterian than it was Methodist.

That's where I did my doctoral program at San Francisco Theological School. My thesis asked what does it mean to be radically inclusive? What does it mean to have extravagant grace and relentless hospitality? How can the church stop being a bludgeon and stop wounding people? How does that work? I represent so many groups that have been wounded, as a person of African descent, as a woman clergy, as a same gender loving woman; I'm just seen as a problem by most of the people that I was connected to in the past. That was sort of my theological side, and I have many different experiences in school. There were times where I went and stayed and studied for a quarter, I've also taught for full semesters at a number of theological schools. I've thought with an emphasis on social justice, preaching, and styles of preaching.

Juan Battle:

We have talked about the past and the present, now let's talk about the future. Before we begin, let's note that you are going to go on sabbatical for 3 months.

Yvette Flunder:

Yes.

Juan Battle:

Could you talk a little bit about what you see yourself doing during that sabbatical?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, I'm going to do some things. Take care of my body. My journey through Covid has been stressful. I'm a very tactical person. I'm among tactical people. We had to come up with some ways to authentically be together when we couldn't be together during the pandemic. That is difficult, you know.

The other thing is to come up with different paradigms to hold the structures together. In terms of finances, programs, funding, and all of that. It's been a task. But we survived and we did not just survive, we thrived, which took a lot of energy to say the least. I also have had conversations now with all my key leaders both at my church and in TFAM that I am actively involved and engaged in a succession plan and retirement. Lord willing, and my next birthday I'll be 68, and my intention is to start the process. It's time for me to take a step back. So part of my taking the sabbatical is to sort of disappear on all my folks and they have to work it. If they don't work, it is not going to get worked. It's like that, you know? So I will spend some time doing some body work and by that I mean some massaging, some baths, and taking care of my body.

I will also make four stops in the United States to have conversations with my regional leaders in TFAM and anyone in their area that they want to bring, so that we can talk about what is next for the LGBT communities of faith. We will be asking questions should we continue to be

independent of everyone? Should we try to come together and be one thing? Especially those of us who have emerged from the metho-bapti-costal traditions, because we are a little bit different from the other folks.

Juan Battle:

What tradition?

Yvette Flunder:

Metho-bapto-costal: methodist, baptist, and pentecostal

Juan Battle:

Okay I get it.

Yvette Flunder:

It’s important for me. You know I still enjoy the ecstatic worship experiences that are a part of our history both as people of African descent and who are in the majority. But also, because we like to party, we like to have a good time and that should not be devoid of our faith and practice. I have seen a little bit more than a 100 of my leaders complete courses of study and theological education. I'm very proud of that by the way. Because it's important that if we are going to be change agents, we have to know what we're talking about.

We have to be able to speak our truth and be connected to an extent, knowledge, and literature. We have to be able to do that. So that's why I'm going to go to four different regions of the country and have conversations. That's where I want to find out where everybody is and how they're feeling, and what are we gonna do next?

How do we move forward and not just be a one hit wonder. I don't want TFAM, or whatever it is eventually called to die because I'm old and/or dead. That's my heart.

The third thing that I'm going to do is go to Cambridge in England to do some adjunct teaching with Alicia Lola Jones. She did that wonderful book on a Black gospel music and gay folks. She teaches at Cambridge, and I'm going to go spend some time with her. I'm going to do some adjunct conversations with her classes and kind of get a sense of where folks are who are not in the United States. The name of her book, by the way, is Flaming which blesses my socks off.

Juan Battle:

Of course that is the name of her book.

Yvette Flunder:

It answers that major question that we do not ask, and that is "Why and how is it that LGBT people have so much to do with the life of gospel music?" We wouldn't even have any good gospel if it really worked for the LGBT communities input, talent, and skill.

So that's my plan.

Juan Battle:

So 10 years from now, What will Yvette's ministry look like?

Yvette Flunder:

I don't know

Juan Battle:

Pontificate.

Yvette Flunder:

I don't know, let me say pontifically. I don't have to know because my testimony, my steps, are ordered by God. Like I said, I don't wanna act so spiritual that it doesn't make sense. I know often what is the will of God, what God leads me to, and I have been amazingly surprised over and over again. I am a good planner, and I can plan really, really well. And then the whole thing just falls completely apart. So I make plans, then none of it happens. I have learned and there is a saying that goes “Learning to lean on Jesus, finding more power than I've ever dreamed, just learning to lean.” There are times much more so now, where I just kind of fall back say, no it's on you, God, to give me clarity about what's next and I’m good with whatever you want. It's never failed me, never ever in my life, and I've had some very close calls that if something had changed just a little bit, it could have been cataclysmic. God, who was rich in mercy, has helped me and brought things to my attention that I could not have known, had it not been dropped into my spirit into my mind.

I do not know anything about the exact next and at that point where I probably have shared with you, if I haven't I should, I'm standing on this proverbial cliff. I've been on this cliff many times, by the way and I have asked God in earlier times in my life when Spirit was calling me to stand on the cliff and jump. I have asked God if you'll just tell me how I am going to survive this jump, I would be happy to obey, because this does not look like this is gonna work. I have said that on numerous occasions. Show me show me I mean, how hard is that, show me how I’m gonna land only to find out that all I ever hear from God when I have this vision is jump is “Jump you know, let go free, fall!” Each time, when I've had this dream, this vision, somehow, the hand of God

catches me before I, you know, turn into a splatter at the end of the bottom of a canyon and lifts me to the other side and when I get to the other side it's always lush and beautiful.

I remember many times in my life asking the question, “Why didn't you show me this? I would have jumped a long time ago”. What I have learned in my walk with God is that God is not bereft of the ability to do great things for us. The problem is God is not weak, concerning God's promise to us. What is problematic is our ability to believe because our belief is often connected to what we have experienced in our past. So if it's something that we haven't experienced, we short change God. God can do anything, so you know I don't know how this one works.

It's not about God's abilities but about the absence of our faith and that's why I've had this dream many times in life. I'm there again. From there again I am being called to leave something without knowing exactly where I'm going.

This time it is the truth at 67. The truth is I don't care where God takes me as long as it's God, as long as I know that it is the hand of God delivering me to my destiny. I don't want to plan and then be wrong. I would rather wait. There's a scripture that says “Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage”, you know because something's coming, something always comes. I was trying to figure out what I was gonna do, you know you don't have a 401k when you're founding pastor of the church. So how are you going to retire? It's a fair question for me to ask after 40 years now between my 10 years at Love Center and my 30 years at City of Refuge, How do you retire? Just about the time that I began to hear, and I shared with you that I was working on succession. You, one of the first people that I talked to just about that time. A door opened, and a way was made and somebody helped me to purchase a place, a house, I had not

owned a house in a while. My mother [her wife] and I have owned three of them, but when we came to Oakland we took the loft that was on top of the church. We turned it and changed it into a living space, so that we could have a hands-on everyday presence while we were restructuring this 31,000 square foot building, to say the very least.

So I didn't know what I was gonna do. And just about the time when I took the plunge and jumped off the cliff, I got a phone call from a real estate friend said “I have the house for you.” I got on the plane and I looked at it. In my spirit I said, yeah, this is it. Looking at this house, it's gonna take more than love and effort, as our old folks used to say, to buy this. The same God who made the way for us to find the house is the God that made the way for us to pay the downpayment on it and that was a miracle. That's the important thing for me to say. It was a miracle. That's how I knew it was the thing and so we have a place in a way. Mother and I can retire to, and I'm happy about that. She's 80, and it's time to kind of get off that grind.

Juan Battle:
Where is this place?

Yvette Flunder:
We're in north Las Vegas which I also didn't think I would ever do. I knew about Henderson, there is a small population of Black folks that live there. I did not know about it, even though I brought my conference to Vegas more than one time, but I've never been into the bedroom communities. They are having a big housing boom and there's no state taxes there. Now you know what they say “Where God leads, God feeds. Where God guides, God provides." So we have a place to retire to which is only an hour by plane back and forth to my church. It's the same

commute that I would have if I had bought a house in the suburbs, just by plane and not by car. For me it is an answer to prayer.

Juan Battle:

During your tenure as bishop, and cultivating and developing people who are at different stages of their ministry, what are the top three bits of advice you find yourself giving over and over again to those who want to do this social justice work?

Yvette Flunder:

Top bits of advice?

First one would be Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, because you will need it.

Second, I think the other thing is the courage to be other. I think that the work of justice means that you probably won't fit into the status quo. So you have to be prepared to be othered, and have the strength to bear what comes with being “other.”

Third, I would say it would be what I have said many times: embrace the Prima Facie Duties, to do no harm. Church and religion can be extremely harmful. Religion can burn you and there's so many parts of me a conservative religion hates: both the fact that I'm a woman, a same gender loving woman. I'm a person of African descent who believes, by the way of reparations. I am a lot of things that folks find very problematic, particularly in mainline religions, and that's not just Christianity. What I have found is that it is extremely important to find a rubric that respects all things. Love the Lord your God. What does the Lord require? I love that passage, in James, it goes “What does the Lord require that you do? Justice, love, mercy and walk humbly before

God.” That goes across every kind of faith path. The same goes for, do no harm. When people say, women shouldn't have abortions, people shouldn't be gay, and that women were not meant to be pastors, or they say Black folks need to humble themselves and remember who they are. It is just amazing to me when there is only really one real litmus test. Do no harm, How can I serve God and serve those that I am called to serve. If I am not motivated by doing the best that I can not to hurt you, not to harm you; then I don't have to have a big, long list of rules and regulations about what we're supposed to do. If I'm going to do no harm I can throw away all those books of order. If I am clear that I am called to do and that you are called to do no harm, then I can say as a leader this is harmful. This thing that you are doing now is harmful. We need to cease and desist on this, and let's see if we can get you some help to show up differently, to show up better than the way that you showed up in this way. That would be the three most important bits of advice that I have.

Juan Battle:

Given what has brought us together. Are there any questions you wish I had asked, but did not, or any information you think I should have that I don't?

Yvette Flunder:

Well, perhaps in many ways as a person with a prophetic reality, a prophetic utterance that stays in me all the time. I think that the question would be, Where are we going from here as people of faith? I will say and have said that we are in full on reformation and Christianity as we know it. Basically we'll never be the same. It's taken a little while for us to find out the wickedness of Christianity in many of his settings, if I may say it that way. The way that it is bludgeon and as a control mechanism. I can’t say that about every faith, because I'm not every faith. I can say that

about the fact that I know there's a reformation that we are in completely now. It's just not ever going to be the same. I know it's not going to be the same, because the young people are not having it. We are getting old and we're gonna die. Just in case you didn't know that.

And we don't get a body here and they are in a totally different place than where we are. Religion is going to change and maybe end up being called something else. I think the other thing is that the concept of race, the construct of a race is also going to change dramatically because several things are happening. The main thing is that the children that the next generation or generation after will be so blended. We are not going to know exactly what to call them. We will ask, what are you, darling? You have curly hair, gray eyes. Tell me again how you identify? When we remove those identifiers, we have to come up with something else, right? So what it is that we call race – Black, White, Asian, or Hispanic – all of that's gonna change when everything is mixed up. And if you notice, look at the commercials on television.

When you look at the movies and you see how much the lines are being crossed that we never thought would ever happen. You know we were told you're supposed to stay with your own kind, but that's not gonna happen. We'll probably come up with something as humans, you know, kind of like brown eyed people mean more to God then grey eyed people. We have a great propensity to find a manifest destiny concept of some sort. I will say that the race construct, just like the religion construct, is going to change dramatically. That's what I see happening right now. The kids are tired and they've been shot to death too many times. Their grief is palpable and it's painful that grown people are shooting and killing children. It is. I can't think of anything more dastardly than that just to get in the news.

It is amazing to me but there is a shift. There's a shift coming, and the radical right in this country knows that, which is why they're so desperate. They are, but they're not faithful. They are desperate, because they want power back. But they're not faithful just like they built every bridge that they could to Donald Trump. Today they are burning those bridges because he's not helpful. I don't want to tell them so "You know, when you, when you embrace a despot what did you think was going to happen right?" You know it was a despot, a snake when you put him in your bosom. So what did you think was gonna happen? Now what you're trying to do is disavow the depth of your relationship with him because that's over, too. But in some ways just me and you talking we needed a fool to come through so that we could unmask the underbelly of our nation and of our religions. We needed to know how horribly hateful things are that are being done in the name of God.

Juan Battle:

I think Amen. Go right there. I think. Amen. Go right there. I'm gonna stop recording

Part III. Overview and History of the Y.A. Flunder Foundation

[Below is an overview and history of the Y.A. Flunder Foundation. This document was prepared by solely by Yvette Flunder and was provided by her to be included in this document.]

Overview

Founded in 1986 and incorporated as a non-profit service organization in 1992, YAFF is committed to providing services and support that profoundly and positively affect the quality of life of people affected by HIV. It is built on the philosophy that all persons have the right to dignity, compassion and ethical treatment, and the right to a clean, safe, and secure environment in which to live. YAFF intentionally reaches out to the traditionally underserved, the vast majority of whom are people of color, LGBTQ, women, low or no income, and/or currently or imminently homeless, and who are often multiply diagnosed with HIV or other disabling conditions. All program services are confidential, interdisciplinary, and culturally sensitive and operate with clear linkages and collaboration with medical and social service providers. YAFF's Board and staff demographics include African American, Hispanic, Transgender, same-gender-loving and HIV+ men and women, reflecting many of the target populations served.

History

The staff of the YA Flunder Foundation has been working together since 1986 when they collectively designed a program which became a Northern California model for promoting AIDS education in the African American community. The programs soon expanded to include housing, policy advisory, care coordination, direct services, and an abundance of support services.

Supportive Housing

The services of YAFF began with HIV education, advocacy and a variety of support and housing options for individuals living with HIV disease on both sides of the Bay. Many were categorically the first of their kind.

In Oakland, *Hazard-Ashley House* was a transitional housing program providing coordinated, comprehensive psychosocial support services for homeless HIV-positive men, historic as the first Alameda County HIV housing program founded by an African American faith community.

Walker House Residential Care Facility for the Chronically Ill was the first and only licensed 24-hour supportive housing program targeting multiple diagnosed persons living with disabling HIV disease or at end-stage in Alameda County. As the HIV epidemic became less lethal, YAFF added long-term supportive housing services including HIV rapid testing, mentoring, partner notification and substance abuse recovery services on-site. Today, Walker House is permanent supportive housing for people living with HIV, with a strong substance abuse recovery component.

Restoration House was a 24-hour dual-diagnosis facility with coordinated HIV support and drug recovery services for HIV-positive African American women, including Transgender women**.** Services includes attendant care, nutrition, and medication management, coordinated medical and HIV support services, onsite psychosocial case management, on- and offsite substance abuse

counseling, spiritual support and 24-hour staff for medical emergencies and crisis intervention. Restoration House was San Francisco's first formal collaboration between an HIV service provider and a woman's substance abuse program – YAFF and The Iris Center Women's Counseling and Recovery Services.

The Ark House, born of three consecutive years of providing the only emergency winter shelter programs in San Francisco County aimed specifically at young adults, was the first emergency transitional housing program for sexual minority young adults located in the Castro district of San Francisco. It houses up to 15 young adults between the ages of 18 and 23, providing on site services as well as referrals to a comprehensive network of supportive services.

YAFF provided technical assistance to the Black Coalition on AIDS for the creation of *Rafiki House,* the first minority-operated HIV Program in San Francisco, and in addition was a key participant in the creation of the *AIDS Housing Plan and Quality Standards for HIV/AIDS Housing,* sponsored by San Francisco and Alameda Counties and the City of Oakland.

Policy and Advocacy

YAFF is a leader in public policy and advocacy, developing platforms from which to address HIV from political, ethnic, gender, economic and service perspectives. From 1986 until the present, the agency has held memberships in: the Alameda County Shelter + Care Consortium, African American AIDS Coalition, African American Interfaith Alliance on AIDS, Ryan White HIV CARE Consortium, Alameda County State of Emergency Task Force, San Francisco Inter-religious Coalition on AIDS, the San Francisco HIV/AIDS Planning and Prevention Council and more.

At State and national levels, YAFF is a past member of the State of California's Education and Prevention Planning Council, California Title II Ryan White Planning Council, and State Assemblywoman Barbara Lee's 13th District Legislative Proposal Planning Subcommittees on HIV Housing and Women's Services Delivery. The agency has past or current representation on the National African American Church Caucus on AIDS, National Black Justice Coalition, National African American Church Caucus on AIDS, Human Rights Campaign, National Minority AIDS Council and the AIDS National Interfaith Network.

At the recent invitation of the White House, YAFF represented African Americans at the National AIDS Roundtable and holds a seat on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS. YAFF is a National Advisor to the Congressional Black Caucus and advises the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention on a variety of national and faith-based HIV initiatives.

HIV Awareness, Education and Prevention

YAFF received the first Northern California HIV/AIDS education and prevention training grant from the State of California targeted at men who have sex with men and high-risk youth in Alameda County and directed at faith communities. The original model has been replicated locally and nationally, with more than 40 topical curricula modules that respond culturally, linguistically, and developmentally to the needs of the African American community. Topics range from and include HIV and Pastoral Care, HIV and Stigma, HIV and Substance Use and Abuse, AIDS Can Be Prevented, HIV in Black America, Black Church Organizing: Creating HIV Ministries, Non-Profit Development, and Sexuality and Underserved Youth in Communities

of Color. Recent augmentations include modules on mental health, nutrition management, alternative treatments, and relapse prevention.

Other education material include the development of media, educational and outreach materials and resources for faith based presentations including: "Let the Healing Begin," a six-part HIV training guide, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and published by YAFF; development of HIV and AIDS peer educator HIV/AIDS related training materials, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to increase volunteerism in America and volunteers for People Living With AIDS; and educational and evaluation materials for prevention intervention and recovery counseling to underserved populations including one-on-one peer support and group meetings/workshops format.

Historically, YAFF was an awardee and presenter at the inaugural National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC) *National Skills Building Conference* and consulted with Balm in Gilead's HIV/AIDS prevention program and drafted one of the initial HIV education curricula for *The National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS* (formerly known as The Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS and The Harlem Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS). YAFF is a certified coordinator of the Black Church Week of Prayer Services for the Healing of AIDS in the East Bay.

YAFF was invited to present the poster *"HIV Education in the African American Church"* at the 8th International AIDS Conference in Amsterdam, and its *Let the Healing Begin: Black Church*

HIV/AIDS Training Curriculum and Training Video Script was adopted as a model and distributed by the Centers for Disease Control.

As Alameda Country declared that AIDS to be a public health emergency in the African American community, YAFF developed and implemented S.O.E.P.I.: The State of Emergency Preaching Institute. SOEPI was a model project funded by the State of California Office of AIDS and Bristol Myers-Squibb, to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance to African American Church leaders in HIV awareness and education.

YAFF was the Centers for Disease Control's first Faith Technical Assistance Provider in the Western Region with its LEAD by Faith: Leadership, Education, Assistance and Development program, an HIV education and prevention train-the-trainer initiative directed toward Black Church leaders.

YAFF was co-producer with Bill Graham Presents for *In Concert Against AIDS*, the first ever Gospel AIDS benefit concert. The agency's annual HIV Education Workshops at the 40,000-member Gospel Music Workshop of America, representing the leadership of the African American Church and Gospel Music recording/media industries, paved the way for One *Voice: Gospel Artists Respond To AIDS. One Voice* was a national education campaign in collaboration with the Gospel Music Workshop of America, Bobby Jones Gospel, BET, Edwin Hawkins Music and Arts Seminar, Balm in Gilead, and Community Supportive Living Systems. YAFF produced four more Gospel benefit concerts, including *Testifying for Life*, the largest Gospel music HIV education and fundraising event ever held. America's most popular contemporary gospel artists have performed at YAFF-sponsored concerts and recording projects including

Edwin Hawkins, Walter Hawkins, Richard Smallwood, Bobby Jones, Tramaine Hawkins, Darryl Coley, Jennifer Holiday, Leila Hathaway, Tonex, Patti LaBelle and many more.

YAFF was the lead agency for Tapestry, a collaboration of education, prevention and treatment information service providers meeting together with faith-based leaders on a regular basis. The organization also hosted a series of West Coast HIV education and prevention events, notably AIDS is No Laughing Matter, the first West Coast Regional education and prevention conference attended by more than 250 participants and faith leaders, and "Taking a Stand," the Bay Area's first African American youth leadership summit. Taking a Stand was a multi-media conference requested and organized by young people themselves, with YAFF's training, logistical support and technical assistance.

International Activism

YAFF sponsors biennial fact-finding and service trips to South Africa and Zimbabwe for African American faith leaders, medical and social work professionals, and community activists, and raises funds and supplies labor to the Mother of Peace Orphanage in Harare, Zimbabwe, independently and in cooperation with the Allen Temple Baptist Church HIV/AIDS Ministry in Oakland, California.

YAFF has co-sponsored the visits of several South African HIV/AIDS missions, AIDS political action personnel and performing groups, and supports fundraising efforts for *The Children of Africa,* benefiting children orphaned and women and children living with HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Currently and historically YAFF offers a blend of direct services that include referrals, coordination of care, counseling, housing assistance and community education.

Primary Care

YAFF collaborated with AIDS Healthcare Foundation, HRSA and SAMHSA to locate a *"Magic" Johnson Jr. Medical Clinic* – providing primary medical care, drug adherence support, and fully licensed pharmaceutical services – at its previous corporate location in San Francisco, along with HIV Rapid Testing, substance abuse intervention support groups, Prevention with Positives, HIV education street outreach and partner notification. In Alameda County, YAFF provided concurrent *Direct Emergency Assistance*: hotel/motel/food vouchers, eviction prevention, emergency housing financial assistance, utility payments, and transportation to (1) improve primary care for people living with HIV/AIDS, and (2) reduce the occurrence of homelessness and hunger.

Transgender Services

Transcending begins with creating safe space for the transgender community. Since 2000 YAFF has been active in providing transgender services through the Transcending Transgender Program, often with the assistance of transgender volunteers and volunteers from the faith community. Services range from weekly outreach to transgender inmates at San Francisco County Jail to clinical and non-clinical counseling, HIV prevention services, structured support groups, mentoring, referrals to primary care and community-based services, alternative health care including acupuncture and massage, spiritual care, and health information forums for the

clients of Transcending and the transgender community at large. Transcending sponsors an annual TFSM-focused Health Fair, and a major Bay Area-wide clean-and-sober Transgender community social event, the Transcending "Halloween Extravaganza." Each event provides Transgender-specific HIV education and prevention information and an opportunity to enroll clients into critical services, as participating medical providers and clinicians present information on HIV therapies, medical screenings, alternative treatment options, and hormone therapy.

Transcending created Alameda County's first and, at present, only Transgender-Specific Resource Directory, and a ground-breaking national curriculum to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of faith practitioners towards this population. Currently Transcending maintains active support groups in San Francisco, a non-Trans-specific charity street outreach that is staffed by Transgender volunteers and delivers food to the hungry in the Tenderloin, a monthly non-Trans-specific outreach at a local women's shelter, and *Voices of Hope*, a Bay Area-wide grief and loss support group that responds to crises and loss of life in the Transgender community.

Mentorship

Funded by the City & County of San Francisco, YAFF adult mentors established guiding relationships with young African American gay and bisexual men ages 18 to 24 who were at high risk for HIV and other STD transmission, violence, academic failure, and substance abuse.

Additional Psychosocial Support

Previously offered were *Safe Harbor*: individual, family and group licensed and psychosocial counseling available to all agency clients; *Hands on Heart Ministry*: Tenderloin neighborhood-based support center providing meals, job training and pastoral care; *Circle of Love*: practical support and recreational activities for people living with disabilities at Providence House in Oakland; and *Jail Ministry*: teams work collaboratively with the San Francisco County Jail Religious Director to provide pastoral care and worship experiences at the maximum-security jail, the medical pods and the women's jail. Jail Ministry provided a direct link to enrollment into traditional services upon re-entry.

YAFF currently sponsors or supports the *Word of Mouth Food Project***:** weekly grocery distribution in collaboration with the Alameda County Food Bank; *TransSaints*: a network of Transgender clergy, community leaders, seminarians and others, that promotes training, mentoring, peer support and authentic voice for justice, public policy, welcome and equal rights; *Brothers Rising*: mentoring, peer and family support for FTM transgenders; *Narcotics Anonymous*: weekly support groups at YAFF's Oakland corporate office; and *Pathways Ministries*: support groups, counseling and recreation for women at "A Women's Place" in San Francisco, an emergency shelter for Cisgender and Transgender women.

Rental Subsidies

YAFF is a HUB agency of Alameda County's Housing and Community Development Program *Project Independence* and is responsible for managing and allocating funds for this county-wide rental subsidy program which to-date has helped more than 1200 persons living with or affected by HIV remain in their own homes.

Case Management

YAFF has provided case management services for over 1200 clients over the past 30 years. Participants receive thorough, comprehensive assessments of need and eligibility. The YAFF case manager then works with participants to establish and maintain their consistent, coordinated in-care relationships with medical, psychosocial, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and rehabilitative service providers.

All current clients have regular, ongoing appointments and contact with case management staff. Psychosocial support services delivered by referral and monitored by case management staff may include housing information, assistance and advocacy, legal assistance and support, transportation, money management, clinical case management, buddy or companion services, benefits assistance, mental health counseling and/or case management, substance abuse counseling, food/meal services, education and vocational training, attendant care, and spiritual counseling or pastoral care. When warranted, other referrals may involve child-care information, in-home support, delivered meals, home care support services, and financial support.

Chapter 3 – Methods

Summary of Contribution to the Field

Utilizing intersectionality as a theoretical framework, while highlighting the interlocking systems of oppression, this project seeks to increase participant awareness and human capital to develop individual-level economic and educational sustainability and growth. In short, the goal is to provide tangible tools to religious social justice leaders that will increase their human capital, social capital, and cultural capital, with the goal of ultimately increasing their economic capital.

Methodology

A case study will be conducted of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries (TFAM), an organization designed "to support religious leaders and laity in moving toward a theology of radical inclusivity." For this organization, radical inclusivity includes work for social justice.

TFAM held a national gathering of more than 200 leaders during July 13-15, 2022 in Phoenix, Arizona.

The methodology for this project was conducted in two parts. The first part, which included 69 interviews, was an evaluation of the larger TFAM organization, while the second part, which included feedback from 27 participants, was an evaluation of a grant writing workshop conducted by Juan Battle. For the purpose of this project, and to distinguish these two data sources, they will be referred to as the TFAM evaluation (n=69) and the grant writing workshop evaluation (n=27).

On Monday, the organizer and prelate of TFAM – Bishop Yvette Flunder – introduced the project to the gathering and encouraged people to participate.

During the gathering – specifically on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday – 69 participants were individually interviewed. Participants were approached and recruited for the study based entirely on their availability at the conference. Whether they were sitting in the lobby waiting for friends, standing in line waiting for lunch, or at the hotel bar, participants were approached by the interviewer and asked to participate.

The interview protocol (see below) began with demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, level of education, tenure in TFAM, etc.). From there, each respondent was interviewed about three broad domains: (1) institutional-level sustainability and the sustainability of (2) individual-level economics and (3) individual-level education.

Particular attention was paid to patterns of answers based on demographic groupings. For example, how were women's responses different from men's responses? Were themes based on the respondent's educational level, age cohort, etc.? Further, because intersectionality was utilized as both a theoretical framework and analytical tool, particular attention was paid to the role of the intersecting demographics (e.g., responses of older versus younger female responses).

TFAM's Evaluation

Interview Protocol

Demographics:

Q1a. How many ***times*** have you come to this gathering?

Q1b. What is your affiliation (pastor, academic, etc.)?

Q1c. What is the highest level of education you have achieved (level of education)?

Q1d. If not clear in Q1c, do they have a bachelor's degree (college educated)?

Q1e. What gender comes closest to describing you (gender)?

Q1f. If you don't mind, what year were you born in (age)?

Economic Sustainability

Q2a. What support do you need to raise money for your "progressive" justice efforts?

- Probe for at least two items

Q2b. What support do you think similar leaders need to raise money for their "progressive" justice efforts?

- Probe for at least two items

Educational Sustainability

Q4a. What support do you need to advance your own theological education?

- Probe for at least two items

Q4b. What support do you think other "progressive" leaders need to advance their own theological education?

- Probe for at least two items

Throughout the week, there were a number of different workshops. On Thursday, a workshop was conducted by Juan Battle on grant writing. About 35 people showed up to the workshop. At the end of the workshop, however, only 27 completed the evaluation form (see below).

As with the TFAM evaluation, particular attention was paid to patterns of answers provided, based on demographic groupings (for examples, see above).

Grant Writing Workshop Structure

The 90 minute workshop was titled Grant Proposal Writing. The workshop leader was listed as: Juan Battle, PhD.; Presidential Professor; Graduate Center, City University of New York; JuanBattle.com. The workshop description read:

> This hands-on (applied) workshop will expose participants to strategies for identifying, applying for, acquiring, and administrating funding from private donors, foundations, and government agencies. Participants will work in small groups to brainstorm sources of funding and strategies for scaffolding proposals. This workshop is designed to develop an intense learning community that will support participants beyond their tenure in Phoenix. Though not required, participants are encouraged to bring a laptop.

The structure of the workshop was:

I. Introduction (10 min)

II. Google (10 min)

a. Docs - notes
b. Sheets - one tab funding sources
c. Sheets - one tab funding partners

III. One Page Proposal (15 min)

a. Use Google Doc

IV. Fifteen (15) Page Proposal (30 min)

a. Abstract
b. Background
c. Methods
d. References
e. Timeline
f. Budget
g. IRB & Human Subjects

V. Populate Google Sheets (15 min)

a. Sheets - one tab funding sources
b. Sheets - one tab funding partners

VI. Complete Evaluation form (10 min)

Grant Writing
Workshop Evaluation

Thank you for participating in this workshop. Before you leave, we would really appreciate your feedback, so we can better serve your colleagues in the future. Therefore, please take a few minutes and complete this survey. As you leave, please hand it to the moderator.

Again, thank you for your time.

Thinking about your TFAM related work,

1a. About how many funding sources did you know about, before you took this workshop?

Enter Number Here: _____

1b. About how many funding sources do you know about now?

Enter Number Here: _____

1c. About how many people did you think you could turn to for support about grant writing and development, before you took this workshop?

Enter Number Here: _____

1d. About how many people do you think you can turn to for support about grant writing and development now?

Enter Number Here: _____

On a scale of zero to ten, with zero meaning very little and ten meaning a lot,

2a. how much do you feel you knew about grant writing and acquisition before you took this workshop?

Enter A Number Between
Zero (meaning very little) and Ten (meaning a lot) Here: _____

2b. how much do you feel you know about grant writing and acquisition now?

Enter A Number Between Zero (meaning very little) and Ten (meaning a lot) Here: _____

2c. How useful was this workshop in helping you move forward with your TFAM work?

Enter A Number Between
Zero (meaning very little) and Ten (meaning a lot) Here: _____

Finally, we would like some basic information about you. Your responses will be aggregated, such that no one will be able to trace your answers back to you.

3a. Age … What year were you born in?

Enter A Four Digit Year Here (e.g., 1972): _____

3b. Gender … How do you describe your gender (e.g., transgender, female, male, etc.)? And feel free to be as specific as you would like.

Enter Your Response Here: _____

3c. Tenure in TFAM … About How Many Years Have You Been Affiliated With TFAM?

Enter Number of Years Here: _____

3d. Level of education … What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed? (Check one)

_____ High School diploma or GED
_____ Some College, no degree
_____ Associates degree
_____ Bachelor's degree
_____ Some Graduate / Professional school
_____ Graduate / Professional degree (e.g., MA, PhD, etc.)

Data Decision

There were two sets of data: 69 interviews and 27 survey responses. The original intention was to write one chapter that integrated both sets of data. However when the actual writing process began, it became clear that the purposes for collecting these two sets of data were very different. The first set of data (69 interviews) was designed to do an assessment of the TFAM gathering. The second set of data (27 respondents) was collected to evaluate a specific workshop on grant writing. As a result, combining these two datasets into one proved problematic for this demonstration project. After consulting with the site team, the dissertation adviser, and the cohort coordinator at New York Theological Seminary, the difficult decision was made to ignore the first set of data (69 interviews) and write the dissertation based on the responses to the evaluation of the workshop (27 respondents).

Data Analysis

Analyses were conducted similarly for both sets of data. More specifically, first, all open-ended questions were thematically coded to facilitate more meaningful comparisons. For example, a respondent may have offered an answer delineating the need for "more fiscal resources" or may have spoken about just not having "enough to get done" what needed to get done. In both instances those responses would have been coded as "needing more money."

After all of the open-ended questions were thematically coded, modal responses were analyzed.

For the quantitative data, responses were entered into and analyzed using SPSS. Univariate analyses were conducted on all questions. For comparison, responses were typically

grouped into two or three categories. Upon completion of the univariate analysis, bivariate analyses were conducted. In the case where there was a comparison between two groups and a continuous variable, a t-test was performed. Conversely, if two categorical variables were being compared, a chi-square was employed.

When conducting quantitative research, invariably the issue of statistical significance comes up. For the purpose of this dissertation, statistical significance will receive little attention; for two reasons. first the sample sizes here are so small, it will be difficult to detect statistical significance. Second, much attention has been paid to the over-reliance on statistical significance when discussing issues of impact in quantitative research.

Much ink has been spilled discussing the limitations of relying on statistical significance; and more specifically the issue of p-values less than .05. For a thorough discussion, see Ziliak and McCloskey and Hubbard. More recently, The *American Statistician* published an article by Wasserstein and his colleagues arguing among other things, that one should not "believe that an association or effect is absent just because it was not statistically significant;" and that one should not "conclude anything about scientific or practical importance based on statistical significance (or lack thereof)."[17]

Therefore, the findings chapters of this dissertation (Chapters 4 and 5) will spend more time discussing relationships and associations and less time discussing statistical significance.

[17]S. Ziliak and D. McCloskey, *The Cult of Statistical Significance: How the Standard Error Costs Us Jobs, Justice, and Lives* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); R. Hubbard, *Corrupt Research: The Case for Reconceptualizing Empirical Management and Social Science* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2016); Ronald L. Wasserstein, Allen L. Schirm and Nicole A. Lazar "Moving to a World Beyond 'p<0.05'," *The American Statistician* 73:sup. 1 (2019): 1, DOI: 10.1080/00031305.2019.1583913.

Chapter 4 – Findings

The findings chapter is divided into four parts. The first part will delineate how the dependent variables were operationalized (Table 1). The second part will focus on the independent variables (Table 2). The third part of the chapter will present findings from comparing the bivariate independent variables to the three dependent variables (see Table 3). Finally, the last portion of this chapter will show findings that compare the multinomial independent variable to the three dependent variables (see Table 4).

Dependent Variables

The workshop had about 35 people. Some came late, some left early, while some stayed throughout. At the end of the workshop, all present attendees were asked to fill out the evaluation form. Surveys with at least 50 percent valid answers were included for analysis. Twenty-seven respondents met the inclusion criteria (see Table 1).

The first two questions asked on the survey were:

1a. About how many funding sources did you know about, before you took this workshop?

Enter Number Here: _____

1b. About how many funding sources do you know about now?

Enter Number Here: _____

A percentage increase was calculated for scores comparing 1b to 1a. For this variable (% Increase Sources), increases ranged from 100 to 4,700 percent; with an overall average increase of 606 percent. Put another way, as a result of attending the workshop, the average person had a sixfold increase in the number of funding sources they were aware of.

Table 1. Dependent Variable Percent Increases, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Descriptions

Variables	Mean Increase (%)	St. Dev.	Range	Description
% Increase Sources	606.38	956.32	100 – 4700	Percent increase in funding sources
% Increase People	621.46	968.98	10 – 5000	Percent increase in people to turn to for support
% Increase Knowledge	385.25	280.62	57 – 1000	Percent increase in grant acquisition knowledge

The evaluation next asked:

1c. About how many people did you think you could turn to for support about grant writing and development, before you took this workshop?

Enter Number Here: _____

1d. About how many people do you think you can turn to for support about grant writing and development now?

Enter Number Here: _____

As with the previous variable, a percentage increase was then calculated for scores comparing 1d to 1c. For this variable (% Increase People), increases ranged from 10 to 5,000 percent; with an overall average increase of 621 percent. Thus, the average participant increased the number of people they could turn to for support about grant writing by over 600 percent.

For the final dependent variable, respondents were asked:

On a scale of zero to ten, with zero meaning very little and ten meaning a lot,

2a. how much do you feel you knew about grant writing and acquisition before you took this workshop?

Enter A Number Between Zero (meaning very little) and Ten (meaning a lot)

Here: _____

2b. how much do you feel you know about grant writing and acquisition now?

Enter A Number Between Zero (meaning very little) and Ten (meaning a lot)

Here: _____

Employing the same methodology as with the previous variables, a percentage increase was calculated for scores comparing 2b to 2a. For % Increase Knowledge, increases ranged from

57 to 1,000 percent, with an average overall increase of 385 percent. Therefore, as a result of participating in the workshop, the average person felt their knowledge about grant writing and acquisition increased by 385 percent.

Independent Variables

Five independent variables were employed for this document (see Table 2). First, to measure gender, participants responded to this question:

> How do you describe your gender (e.g., transgender, female, male, etc.)? And feel free to be as specific as you would like.
>
> Enter Your Response Here: _____

Those responses were coded such that females were coded 1 (n=18) and males were coded zero (n=9).

To measure race, participants responded to:

> How do you describe your race (e.g., Black, African American, Latinx, etc.)? And feel free to be as specific as you would like.
>
> Enter Your Response Here: _____

Of the 27 people who responded, 24 (88.9%) said Black while three (11.1%) provided another answer.

To measure education, respondents were questioned as to:

What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed? (Check one)

_____ High School diploma or GED

_____ Some College, no degree

_____ Associates degree

_____ Bachelor's degree

_____ Some Graduate / Professional school

_____ Graduate / Professional degree (e.g., MA, PhD, etc.)

Because of the distribution, those with graduate and/or professional degrees (n=20; 74.1%) were coded one, while all others were coded zero (n=7; 25.9%).

Also important to this research is the amount of time a respondent has been affiliated with TFAM. Thus, participants were asked:

About How Many Years Have You Been Affiliated With TFAM?

Enter Number of Years Here: _____

To compare evenly distributed groups, respondents were grouped into three categories: one or two years (n=10; 37%), three to five years (n=9; 33.3%), six or more years (n=8; 29.6%). Finally, the perceived overall utility of the workshop was measured. Therefore, they were asked:

How useful was this workshop in helping you move forward with your TFAM work?

Enter A Number Between Zero (meaning very little) and Ten (meaning a lot)

Here: _____

Those who provided the number ten (n=19; 70%) were coded one; while those who responded with any number between and including zero thru nine (n=8; 29.6%) were coded zero.

Table 2. Independent Variable Codes, Frequencies, Percentages, and Descriptions (n=27)

Variables & Codes	Freq.	Valid %	Description
Female			Dummy variable for gender; females coded 1 and males coded 0
Females (1)	18	66.7	
Male (0)	9	33.3	
Black			Dummy variable for race; Black respondents coded 1 and non-Black coded 0
Black (1)	24	88.9	
Non-Black (0)	3	11.1	
Graduate Degree			Dummy variable for education; respondents with graduate degrees were coded 1 and those without were coded 0
Yes (1)	20	74.1	
No (0)	7	25.9	
TFAM Tenure			Variable measuring number of years affiliated with TFAM
1 or 2 years (1)	10	37.0	
3 to 5 years (2)	9	33.3	
6 or more (3)	8	29.6	
Workshop Useful			Variable measuring utility of workshop. Those who said 10 were coded 1, all others were coded 0.
Useful=10 (10)	19	70.4	
Useful<10 (0 thru 9)	8	29.6	

Bivariate Analyses

The next step was to measure the relationship between the independent variables and each of the dependent variables (see Table 3). For the purpose of consistency across the dependent variables, this section will address each independent variable in its entirety, then move to the next independent variable.

First, examining gender, we find that females scored higher on Percent Increase in Sources than did males. It is also worth noting that this relationship was significant at the .10 level. Females also scored higher than males on the Percent Increase in People outcome measure; that relationship also was significant at the .10 level. Finally, we see that females also scored higher on Percent Increase in Knowledge. However, it is worth noting that the relationship was significant at the .05 level.

Table 3. T-Test Comparison of Means on Dependent Variables by Independent Variables (n_1 in parentheses)

Independent Variables	% Increase in Sources	% Increase in People	% Increase in Knowledge
Female			
Females	774.12†	802.94†	460.56*
	(17)	(18)	(18)
Males	250	258.56	234.67
	(8)	(9)	(9)
Black			
Black	637.39	632.08	391.04
	(23)	(24)	(24)
Non-Black	250	536.67	339
	(2)	(3)	(3)
Graduate Degree			
Yes	354.05*	476.10	282.25***
	(19)	(20)	(20)
No	1405.5	1036.86	679.57
	(6)	(7)	(7)
Workshop Useful			
Useful=10	487.89	732.21	395.63
	(19)	(19)	(19)
Useful<10	981.67	358.50	360.63
	(6)	(8)	(8)

†p ≤.10, *p ≤.05, **p ≤.01, ***p ≤.001

When measuring outcomes by race, Black respondents scored higher on all outcome measures than did non-Black respondents. And while none of these relationships were statistically significant, they were consistent.

Examining education, we see that those without graduate degrees benefitted more than did their counterparts with graduate degrees. It is also worth noting that while the difference was statistically significant for Percent Increase in Sources (.05) and Percent Increase in Knowledge (.001), it was not significant for Percent Increase in People.

Comparing those who found the workshop useful at level 10 to those who reported less than 10, the results conflict and therefore interesting. For the other independent variables examined thus far, there is consistency across the dependent variables. More specifically, if a group scored higher on one independent variable, that group tended to score higher on the other two independent variables. That was not true for the workshop useful variable. More specifically, for the Percent Increase in Sources, those who reported at level 10 scored lower than their counterparts. For Percent Increase in People, however, "level 10 people" scored higher than other participants. And comparatively speaking, for Percent Increase in Knowledge, the groups were approximately equal.

Up until this point in the analysis, all of the previous associations were measured with a t-test. However, for the variable measuring the tenure a respondent had with TFAM, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) had to be performed, because three groups – not two – were being compared on the dependent variables. Findings show (See Table 4), that those with longer tenure benefited most concerning the Percent Increase in Sources. For the Percent Increase in People variable,

those with three to five years tenure with TFAM benefited most, and that same group benefited most with Percent Increase in Knowledge.

Table 4. ANOVA Comparison of Means on Dependent Variables by TFAM Tenure (n_1 in parentheses)

Independent Variables	% Increase Sources	% Increase People	% Increase Knowledge
TFAM Tenure			
1 or 2 years	507.78 (9)	583.50 (10)	359.70 (10)
3 to 5 years	541.63 (8)	915.22 (9)	447.78 (9)
6 or more years	782.13 (8)	338.5 (8)	346.88 (8)

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter will be separated into: limitations, implications, and a presentation for areas of future research.

Limitations

The first major limitation is the sample size. Ultimately, only 27 cases were analyzed for this dissertation. As a result, generalizability is greatly limited. Additionally, because of the small sample size, the level of in-depth analysis is compromised. In other words when one breaks 27 cases down into smaller groups, by definition, statistical power is decreased.

A second limitation is that only one site was utilized for this research. This greatly limited the ability to compare across sites. It also begs the question of whether the findings were specific to the site or how much of the findings were specific to the broader population represented by that site?

Third, all of the analysis done for this research was quantitative. Quantitative analysis does a great job delineating the presence or absence of a phenomenon. It also does a good job of examining comparisons. Yet quantitative approaches are limited in understanding the process of how something develops or what something means to the respondent. For that work, one must engage in some level of qualitative research.

Fourth, the research presented here is cross-sectional. The data were gathered at one moment and time. What findings would have been revealed had this work been done

longitudinally? What kind of research questions would have been asked and what kind of data would have been gathered under those conditions?

Fifth, everyone who participated in this study was born, raised, and currently resides in the United States of America. Something woefully lacking here is an international context for understanding the interrelationships among progressive theologians, social justice, and capitalism.

Next, all participants identified as Christian. How might this research have been different had some of the participants been Buddhist, others Muslim, or some agnostic or atheist? To what degree are these findings about Progressive theologians specific to Christians? Without a comparison group, we cannot know.

Finally, for all of the participants, English is their primary language. As alluded to in the previous limitations, the homogeneity of this population has advantages but also leads to significant limitations. Even Within the Christian faith and within the United States, there is significant heterogeneity. one of many possible entrees into that could have been language.

Implications

All of these limitations notwithstanding, this work clearly has important implications. Given these findings, there are clear actions that individuals, churches, and seminaries can take to advance the project of more successfully oriented progressive leaders who want to acquire and leverage economic resources to implement their social justice work.

To that end and given the findings of this research, there are at least three things individuals can do. First, they can surround themselves with organizations that already have

funding. There are many things one can learn formally, but most mentoring takes place informally. In short, one learns simply by being in the room. And speaking of rooms to be in, individuals can develop better relationships with funders. All too often when attending conferences or gatherings, people will seek out others who do the work they do. What they do not seek out are those who fund the work they do. Finally, in addition to surrounding themselves with funded organizations and potential funders, individuals can get explicit training on both writing and administering grants. Options for potential opportunities can be gathered from funded organizations and potential funders.

Churches and religious institutions can facilitate training for their leaders and laity. Quite often church leaders will bring in other preachers to inform and empower their parishioners, but how often do they bring in funders or people who can help with financial literacy? Church leaders can also preach and teach about progressive politics and not just prosperity. Doing so would offer a broader context for the acquisition of wealth. In other words, empowering people to not only get wealth, but also empowering them on what to do with it when they get it. Finally, churches and religious institutions can develop relationships with local business improvement districts. These improvement districts can help religious organizations think more broadly about how to provide services to constituents beyond their parishioners. They can help them nurture partnerships around service delivery, developing local businesses, and even developing and providing affordable housing.

There are at least two things seminaries can do. First, they can more explicitly integrate development into their curriculum. It is unfortunate for anyone to get a master's degree in divinity and never have taken a course on financial literacy, fiscal church management, or grant

writing. Long gone are the days when a church leader could depend solely on tithes and offerings to keep a religious institution afloat. Second, seminaries can expand their curriculum to emphasize joint spiritual development and marketable skills. What would it look like for seminaries to partner with other academic institutions so that students would graduate with a master's in divinity as well as a bachelor's in social work, or a master's in divinity and a bachelor's in political science or community development? In short, the broader one's social and human capital, the greater the opportunity to increase one's economic capital.

Implications From a Conversation with the Activist Leader (Bishop Yvette Flunder)

After reading a complete draft of the entire dissertation, my advisor and I sat down for a conversation about the document and the implications of the work therein. What follows is a summary of the highlights of that conversation.

Bishop Flunder began by speaking of the importance of this work. She argued that "I've seen destruction when people didn't have money and destruction when they got it and didn't know what to do with it."

One of her favorite sayings is that social justice ministers in vulnerable communities, by and large, don't have access to dead people's money. We agreed that how can you care for the poor, if the poor don't have money to pay you? We felt that people studying for pastoral care and ministry, who feel called to serve those who are marginalized or those called who are a part of an institution that considers itself liberal and/or progressive, are often launched into the forefront of the work, underprepared and under-resourced to do the work.

This begs the question of what is the longevity for faith-based organizations, institutions, and individuals organizing around issues related to women, LGBT communities, the inner city, environmental concerns, racial equity, etc.? What will those organizations do if they don't know how to tap into sustainable economic resources?

We concluded that such organizations needed to (better) use grantsmanship to bring dollars to their organizations and thus advocate for their causes. We felt all progressive, faith-based organizations should expand their services to include housing (vouchers), mental health support, substance abuse resources, daycare, after school services, food services, etc.? Very little of this work can be done or sustained without a constant influx of economic resources that match, if not exceed, the need.

From there we had a rather lengthy conversation about how to move from prescription into description. In other words we wanted the conversation to move from discussing what ought to happen into discussing how to make it happen. And more germane to the topic of this dissertation, we spent quite a bit of time discussing what religious institutions and seminaries could do to make this happen.

We felt that seminaries needed to change their curriculum and include courses on fundraising and grantsmanship. Further, we felt these courses must be required and not offered simply as electives. Courses could be offered with such titles as How Can You Afford To Do

Justice? There might also be courses on How To Establish a Board of Directors or How To Buy a Building.

We are convinced that, arguably, this trajectory of courses are just as important as homiletics. Ultimately, seminaries and religious institutions need to see grant writing and fundraising as a ministry. In short, churches need a ministry for grants as much as it needs a diaconate. Further, not only do faith-based organizations need to know how to acquire funds, they need to know how to manage them after they get them.

For the last part of the conversation, Bishop Flunder used herself and her ministry as a case study. She argued that in the beginning of her ministry, she was exiled. Therefore, she had to figure out how to find money and people who were wealthy. If she was going to do something, she and her inner circle had to find people who could fund it. Those whom she felt called to serve, just didn't have the resources to meet their own needs, much less pay her.

Early during her ministry, she was surprised that some organizations were not willing to tap into federal funds or well known funders. She went on to note that even in the current Biden administration, people of color ministries and poor churches have missed out on opportunities.

Flunder recounted that no one initially gave her money for the HIV work she was doing. Ultimately, she had to petition resources from federal, state, and local funders as well as foundations. Thus, this became the model she used to start TFAM. To do so, she started two corporations: Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, which was a part of City of Refuge; and the

Arc of Refuge, which was a 501c3. TFAM was an extension of City of Refuge. Eventually, the Arc of Refuge, operating as a 501c3, enabled TFAM to go after grant money that was private and institutional (e.g., SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration] and HRSA [Health Resources and Services Administration]). As a result the Arc foundation did the western region of federal grants for HIV services; and TFAM, because of its physical and organizational proximity, indirectly benefited.

Future Research

The research presented here is but a first step. One can almost see the data presented here as pilot data for a larger project. More specifically, one can take the information presented here and administer the workshop to a larger group. If one can imagine assessing the impact of this Workshop on 270 people instead of only 27 people, the generalizability of the findings would be all the more robust.

Future research would also benefit from administering this program at more than one site. Even though the people for this project came from across the country, they were definitely more homogeneous than not. Employing more than one site would allow for comparison groups that are practically impossible here.

Developing a qualitative approach to this project would definitely expand the richness of knowledge to be acquired. For example, one could ask why people are hesitant or even prone to engaging in development. One could also learn more information about the individual experiences and attitudes about fundraising. Finally, qualitative research allows for more open-

ended questions that would create a space to better understand the meaning making process for respondents.

As stated earlier, the data for this project are cross-sectional. Future research could engage in longitudinal endeavors, investigate the effects of this workshop for the respondents over a longer. period of time. With that information, one could also look at group differences. For example, a year later, do women benefit more than men?

Finally, future research needs to engage in the process of ensuring a more diverse sample. For example, the sample for this study was entirely US-based, Christian, and English-speaking. While one could argue there is diversity within that population, there is more diversity outside of it.

Chapter 6 – Ministerial Competencies

This chapter is divided into four parts: Description of Overall Process, Committee Members, Instructions to Committee Members, and Committee Members' Assessments.

Part I – Description of Overall Process

The procedures employed for assessing ministerial competencies was conducted differently for this document than is traditional.

In short, I received instruction for the competencies after the proposal had been reviewed and accepted. Further, the research was conducted and a complete draft of the demonstration project was completed. Therefore, appropriately incorporating the ministerial competencies as described was not feasible.

After consulting with my NYTS cohort coordinator as well as my site team, we brainstormed and developed an alternate procedure.

Because of calendar conflicts, my dissertation advisor (Bishop Flunder) could not participate in this portion. Therefore, another site-team member (Rev. Dr. Sexton) agreed to spearhead this portion of the project.

She and I met several times to decide which of the competencies I would focus on. We ultimately decided to focus on leader(ship) and counselor – two areas included in NYTS's list. Given the broader scope of where I thought my larger ministry might go, we also decided to add a third area – strategic engagement.

The next step was to decide the criteria for who would sit on this ministerial competencies' committee. Because it was clear that their job was to assess me and not my project, we felt it had to be people who knew me both personally and professionally for at least 10 years, as well as had expertise in ministry and/or the academy. We finally agreed upon five people: Rev. Dr. Lynn Sexton; Bishop Tonyia Rawls; Rev. Mark Fowler; Dr. Nicole Lucas, Phd; and Dr. Joe Lott, Phd. Each of their biosketches and thus justification for their inclusion can be found in Part II of this chapter (see below).

A thorough description of the instructions given to the committee can be found in Part III (see below). In short, they were told to write assessments of me around those three areas, and then meet as a group to discuss their descriptions (what needs addressing) and prescriptions (how to address them).

Part II – Committee Members

The committee consisted of five people: Rev. Dr. Lynn Sexton; Bishop Tonyia Rawls; Rev. Mark Fowler; Dr. Nicole Lucas, Phd; and Dr. Joe Lott, Phd. Each biosketch can be found below.

Rev. Dr. Lynn R. Sexton – Chair of Ministerial Competencies Committee

Retrieved from: https://sacredfellowshipministries.org/who-we-are

Rev. Dr. Lynn is a native New Yorker, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, the third daughter of a Bishop in the Church of God in Christ. She spent many years actively as layministry, Church Clerk, Chairperson of the Women's Ministry, singer, praise team leader, facilitator of a Couples Ministry and teaching Continuing Education - Leadership classes. From 1994 until May 2014 Rev. Dr. Lynn served as a member, deacon, minister and reverend, in other ministries. She received a Doctorate in Parish Ministry in May, 2014 and a Masters in Divinity in May 2008 from New York Theological Seminary. After embracing her God–given vision for ministry she returned to her community and founded Sacred Fellowship Ministries.

Rev. Dr. Lynn's retired after 34 years of Federal and City of New York City service. She is the mother of six children and grandmother of many more.

Bishop Tonyia Rawls

Retrieved from: http://www.sacredsoulscommunitychurch.org/about-us-2/

Bishop Tonyia M. Rawls is a national faith leader and social justice activist who has focused the majority of her work in the Southeastern United States fighting oppression and discrimination. In 2000, Bishop Rawls founded Unity Fellowship Church Charlotte and in April 2008, was consecrated as one of the first women Bishops in the Los Angeles-based Unity Fellowship Church Movement's history. In 2014 she founded Sacred Souls Community Church, a diverse congregation of progressive Christians in Charlotte. They are currently finalizing steps for affiliation with the United Church of Christ. She also takes her work outside the walls of the church. Bishop Rawls is cofounder of the Charlotte Clergy Coalition for Justice and the National Trans Religious Cohort which provides training and support to trans and gender-variant seminary and religious studies students.

She is the Founder and Executive Director of The Freedom Center for Social Justice (FCSJ). Founded in 2009, they work intersectionally through their programs that support the trans community, people of color, people of low wealth, youth and sexual minorities. Bishop Rawls is the architect of the FCSJ *Do No Harm Campaign*, which provides safe space for faith leaders to discuss challenging justice issues like marriage, religious refusals, equal protection for LGBTQ citizens and other current issues impacting communities of faith. Her team also created the "Yes, You Can Go" campaign which is distributing trans-welcoming restroom signage in NC. She is also one of the leaders of the NC Moral Monday Movement which was created by Rev. Dr. William Barber, to combat injustice in the State of NC. April 2016 marked the launch

of the Beta testing for a new network they are creating for trans people of faith and allies. The Transgender Faith and Action Network provides critical information that ranges from healthcare and employment opportunities to research and community for those often left isolated.

Bishop Rawls has also been a reviewer for the Journal of African-American Studies and is published in Black Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies (Released 2010), Sojourners, SAGE and other printed and electronic publications. She has been a guest speaker at Duke University School of Divinity, Union Theological Seminary, and met with groups as diverse as the NAACP and leadership teams at Wells Fargo bank. Bishop Rawls is a graduate of Duke University and done post-graduate work at Episcopal Divinity School in Boston, MA. She is a two-term member of the Governing Board of the North Carolina Council of Churches, and currently sits on several other local and national boards and advisory councils. She is passionate about working closely with other local and national leaders and organizations to create a more just world.

Rev. Mark Fowler

Retrieved from: https://tanenbaum.org/about-us/who-we-are/staff/

Rev. Mark Fowler (Chief Executive Officer) guides Tanenbaum to the fulfillment of its mission to promote justice and build respect for religious difference by transforming individuals and institutions to reduce prejudice, hatred, and violence. As CEO, Rev. Fowler is responsible for all of Tanenbaum's departments, the design and implementation of all Tanenbaum trainings, and the expansion of Tanenbaum programs nationally and internationally.

Rev. Fowler represents Tanenbaum on the United Nations Multifaith Advisory Council for the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion, the Inclusion Allies Coalition, and Interfaith United NYC.

As architect of Tanenbaum's Corporate Membership Program, Rev. Fowler has conducted trainings at GSK, Merck, Turner Broadcasting, PwC, The Walt Disney Company, CVS Health, Aetna, Bloomberg, Sodexo, Google, Moody's, Bank of America, Walmart, and Target, among others. He has also managed the design of Tanenbaum's Religious Diversity Leadership Summit and the Religious Diversity Symposium, which have brought together senior leaders, DEI practitioners and advocates to strategize on creating religiously inclusive workplaces.

Rev. Fowler led the evaluation of Tanenbaum's Education program and managed the process and creation of its second editions of the *Religions in My Neighborhood* and *World Olympics* curricula.

Rev. Fowler is a sought-after keynote speaker and facilitator in all of Tanenbaum's core program areas, and has addressed organizations globally on issues of equality in race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. Recently, Rev. Fowler delivered the keynote at the 2020 Diversity Best Practices EmERGe conference, was featured in a fireside chat with Robert Cook, CEO and President at FINRA's 2020 Virtual Diversity Summit and continued in his role as Navigator at the 2020 unveiling of OUTNext's latest curriculum "Out of the Closet and into the C-Suite."

Over the course of Rev. Fowler's tenure at Tanenbaum, he has presented at the National Council on the Social Studies, National Association of Multicultural Education, Teaching Tolerance, the YMCA of Greater New York, Partnership for Afterschool Education, Asia Society, National School Board Association, the United Nations, the Newseum, the Power of Women Institute, the Return on Inclusion Summit, the OutNEXT Summit, and the Forum on Workplace Inclusion regarding prejudice reduction, conflict resolution, bias and bullying.

Rev. Fowler earned a B.A. in English and Education at Duke University and was trained as a Mediation and Conflict Resolution Specialist with the NYC Department of Education. Rev. Fowler also is a graduate of the One Spirit Interfaith Seminary, is an ordained Interfaith/Interspiritual minister, and is a Dean of second-year students at One Spirit Interfaith Seminary.

Dr. Nicole Lucas, PhD

Retrieved from:

https://www.uncfsu.edu/fsu-names-new-associate-vice-chancellor-for-institutional-effectiveness-research-and-planning

Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning

Fayetteville State University has named Dr. Nicole James Lucas as the new Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning. Most recently, Dr. Lucas was the Interim Director for Institutional Effectiveness and the SACSCOC Liaison at Fayetteville State University. Prior to that, Dr. Lucas served for 5 years as chair of the Sociology Department and 3 years as chair of the Council of Chairs.

As the Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning, Dr. Lucas will, among other responsibilities, spearhead long-range, strategic university-wide planning and direct the assessment of FSU's strategic plan. Dr. Lucas also serves as FSU's SACSCOC Liaison and is currently leading our 10-year SACSCOC reaffirmation. Dr. Lucas holds a Ph.D. and an M.S. degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; and received her bachelor's degree from Oberlin College.

Dr. Joe Lott, PhD.

Retrieved from: https://education.uw.edu/people/faculty/jlott1

Associate Professor, Educational Foundations, Leadership & Policy

University of Washington, Seattle

Founding Director, Brotherhood Initiative

Professor Lott studies racial identity development and civic engagement among Black college students, the impact of college experience on civic and political dispositions, and how to change the culture of going to college through parent-school-community partnerships. His research interests include using university-community partnerships to foster wellness and educational achievement among males of color throughout school systems. He shares his wealth of knowledge through teaching classes on applied statistics, civic engagement in higher education, school-community partnerships, sociology of education and student development.
Professor Lott is founding director of the UW's Brotherhood Initiative, a program dedicated to empowering undergraduate males of color to thrive on campus and graduate prepared for a lifetime of leadership, service and success. He also serves as director for the Leadership in Higher Education master's program and as co-principal investigator on the Equitable Parent-School Collaboration Research project.

He is co-editor of the book “Multilevel Modeling: Techniques and Applications in Institutional Research” and his articles include “Reinforcing Deficit, Journeying Toward Equity Cultural Brokering in Family Engagement Initiatives” in the American Educational Research Journal and “Black students in college and civic engagement: academic and social influences” in College Student Affairs Journal.

Part III – Instructions to Committee Members

The information below was sent via email, after a one-on-one phone call with each member delineating the project and expectations.

Dear Ministerial Competencies Team Member,

First, thank you for agreeing to serve on the ministerial competencies' committee of my demonstration project.

Rev. Dr. Lynn Sexton has graciously agreed to spearhead this effort with me. Bishop Tonya Rawls is also on the site team. Rev. Mark Fowler and Dr. Joe Lott have agreed to join the team just for this ministerial competencies portion.

I have already had the opportunity to speak with you individually about this process. However, for your reference, attached to this document is the information provided to me from NYTS.

The three areas of competencies you'll be evaluating me on are leader, counselor, and strategic engagement. Your evaluation will be in two parts. For the first part, you'll "give one or more examples of this competency as you have observed it." Two or three paragraphs will be more than sufficient. For the second part, you'll assign a qualifying word. More information can be found attached.

The immediate next step is to schedule a meeting, where the team can come together and share their answers with each other and the student. To that end, please fill out this doodle as soon as your calendar allows.

Again, in advance, thank you all for agreeing to participate in this process. I look forward to your individual and collective assessments as I journey toward my doctorate of ministry.

juan (smile)

New York Theological Seminary

Doctor of Ministry Program

Assessment of Candidate Competency

Introduction

The Doctor of Ministry is a professional degree designed to increase knowledge and competency in the practice of ministry. The following instrument is designed to help the Site Team and Candidate together assess the individual Candidate's current level of competency in a variety of areas of ministry, and to determine which areas in particular the candidate should consider to increase through the Demonstration Project.

The primary focus of this assessment instrument is on the Candidate's role and performance in the local ministerial setting. It is not concerned with matters of individual personality or one's perceived fitness for a particular ministry. It is also not an instrument designed to assess one's theological commitments and beliefs. Such matters may come up in the assessment process, but the Candidate for the Doctor of Ministry is not being evaluated for his or her fitness for a particular ministry, nor on his or her theological beliefs.

The Team and Candidate working together are free to adapt the instrument to their own context or situation. In doing so it is important that an appropriate range of areas of competency be considered; that the Candidate be allowed sufficient opportunity to hear and respond to the assessments of the Site Team; and that a final written report on the Candidate's competencies in

ministry, drawn from this assessment process and to which Candidate and Site Team members alike agree, be submitted to the D. Min. Mentor as outlined in the syllabus for the Mentor and Research Seminar.

Site Team members are asked to be sensitive but honest in responding to each of the areas. Should anything of a confidential nature arise, members are reminded that they are not to discuss it outside the Site Team meeting.

Guidelines for the initial Site Team Meeting

The Site Team is chaired by the Candidate. At its first meeting attention should be given to: (1) introducing members to one another and developing an initial sense of community; (2) providing information on the Doctor of Ministry program and the expectations of the Site Team members within the parameters of the program; (3) setting dates for future meetings; and (4) providing an initial explanation of the Competency Assessment that is to be conducted.

Candidates should pass out copies of the statement of Site Team Tasks and the Competency Assessment Instrument during the initial meeting with the team. It is important to go over these materials and discuss expectations for the coming year. Before the conclusion of the first meeting, a working schedule for up-coming tasks needs to be established.

It is sometimes helpful to gain insight into various areas of one's ministerial competency by talking with others who know the Candidate. If Site Team members do so, however, they are to exercise caution, for such conversations, even if they are intended to be for a good cause, can have negative effects. If the purpose is not clearly explained, or if particular questions are

perceived to be "looking for dirt," the result can be to foster a negative atmosphere and "behind-the-back" criticism. A Candidate cannot respond effectively to criticisms or concerns that come from anonymous or absent sources at the Site Team meeting, however accurate or fair such criticisms might be. Site Team members are urged accordingly to exercise caution in speaking about the Candidate, and especially about the Competency Assessment process, with others.

One whole meeting of the Site Team is to be devoted to the Competency Assessment. The Team as a whole should determine at its initial meeting when the Assessment will take place. At that meeting Candidate and Team members alike are to come prepared to discuss the information requested on the instrument. If possible, members should write their responses in advance of the Assessment meeting and bring these written responses with them in order to facilitate the process. Candidates should have additional copies of the Assessment instrument available at the meeting in case anyone forgets to bring a copy.

The Candidate and Team are free to determine together how they wish to proceed with the actual assessment process. They may decide to omit some areas where it seems to them appropriate, and may add others that seem relevant to the particular candidate and/or ministry setting. It is important that time be devoted during the meeting for the Site Team to discuss adequately each area of competency the Team agrees to cover. Candidate and Site Team members alike are asked to be honest and forthright, yet considerate in their responses. A member of the Site Team (not the Candidate) should be designated to serve as the scribe for the meeting to take notes that will be available to the Candidate later as she or he writes up the report on the meeting.

The Candidate is to have sufficient time to share his or her responses with the rest of the Team and to respond to the Team's assessment. Candidates must listen to the insights or feedback of

the Team in an open and responsive manner, without being defensive or reactive. The goal is for the Candidate and Team to arrive at common areas of agreement as much as possible.

The final task for the Team and Candidate at this meeting is to agree upon three competency areas that are to be developed through the Demonstration Project that will eventually be proposed. At least one of these competencies is to be in an area where Team members and Candidate agree that the Candidate needs to develop.

A final written report on the Assessment, together with a description of the two or three competency areas that are to be developed in the course of the Demonstration Project and the reasons for their particular selection, needs to be turned in to the mentor on the date listed on the syllabus for the Mentor and Research seminar.

Ministerial Competency Assessment Instrument

Below you will find a list of qualifying words, followed by areas of competency with specific descriptive phrases. Before each phrase you will see a line. Considering the candidate's competencies in each area, you are to write in one of the qualifying words before each descriptive phrase. Where possible, you may provide specific examples in order to illustrate your response. Use the back of the page if more space is required. Please remember that you are assessing a concrete person. Do not assess according to an ideal but how you actually see this person performing in ministry.

Key to the Meaning of Qualifying Words

Continue – This is a competency that this person already excels or rates as highly satisfactory in performance.

Develop – This is a competency that this person shows strength in, but needs to hone and smooth in order to develop further or excel.

Attention – This points to an area where special attention is needed, especially in light of a particular ministry in which the person is engaged. It may be that the person was never provided an opportunity to develop competency, but it could also be that a personal characteristic (mood, temperament, commitment, or problem) interferes with the development and execution of the competency.

Start – This designates a competency for which a gift has been uncovered but is not being used, and is an area to develop because the talent is latent.

Skip – This is a competency that this person for some reason should leave alone. Be sure to indicate why she or he should leave it alone.

No Basis – If there is no basis for assessment for this candidate, say so.

1. Leader

A leader is one who creates an environment in which the gifts of the Spirit may flourish. She or he is effective in empowering others to realize their own calling or gifts, and facilitates opportunities in which others can flourish. Such a person is characterized by a willingness to listen and respond, the capacity to take the initiative when appropriate, the ability to delegate responsibility to capable people, and the sensitivity to share resources. To this end the Candidate demonstrates:

- a willingness to learn from others
- an ability to communicate an overall sense of direction and to enable others to accomplish it
- consistent ability to follow-through on plans
- willingness and ability to take initiative when appropriate
- willingness and ability to delegate responsibility to capable people
- respect for talents and abilities of others, and ability to facilitate their exercise effectively
- ability to motivate others to achieve their best efforts
- ability to provide support and to follow-up on the initiatives of others
- willingness to show appreciation for a job well done (including her or his own)
- ability and willingness and/or ability to share knowledge and resources

- ability to give constructive criticism effectively

Please give one or more examples of this competency as you have observed it:

What qualifying word would you assign? _____

2. Counselor

Counseling is concerned with the work of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. In performing these tasks the counselor has the privilege of walking with others on their inner journey toward wholeness. The effectiveness of any form of counseling is always contingent on the pastor, rabbi or other religious leader. Whatever model or theory one chooses to guide one=s practice, it is imperative that the counselor be capable of establishing creative relationships that can help others become more whole. To the degree that the counselor is open, genuine, free, self-accepting and growing, she or he will foster these qualities in others. To this end the Candidate is:

- an open, honest, genuine, free person
- a self-accepting and growing person
- an accessible or approachable person
- skilled in relating and communicating
- able to aid in healing or restoration to wholeness
- able to help others to sustain, to endure, and to work through difficulties or crises
- able to guide others and to walk along them through their inner journey
- able to be an agent of reconciliation, to re-establish broken relationships between self and others, and self and God

- knowledgeable regarding human psychological development

- able to recognize the limits on his or her own competency as a counselor, and to make appropriate referrals when necessary

Please give one or more examples of this competency as you have observed it:

What qualifying word would you assign? _____

3. Strategic Engagement

This ministerial competency was developed in partnership between the student and the site team. The site team asked the student "As you see your ministry to the world, what do you think you need to work on, from the inside out?" The student responded that he needed to be more intentional about engaging in projects. With limited time and resources, one has to be more strategic about which projects one engages in.

The site team then asked the student to think about two broad questions: first what attracts you now; and second what are you saying no to and why?

This line of reasoning led to a list of questions that the site team could ponder in order to support the student, as he engages in more intentional strategic engagements. Those questions included:

- Given this season of his life, what criteria should Juan use to engage projects?
- Given this season of his life, what criteria should Juan use to NOT engage projects?
- "Ministerially," given what he's done, what might he consider doing next?
- "Ministerially," given what he's done, what might he avoid?

Please give one or more examples of this competency as you have observed it:

What qualifying word would you assign? _____

This last question (see below) can be related to any of the three ministerial competencies or pertain to any aspect beyond them. More broadly, concerning his ministerial competencies, what question do you wish Juan had asked, but he didn't?

Part IV – Committee Members' Assessments

Below are transcripts from what each committee member wrote in advance of the meeting; as well as notes I took during that meeting. Further, members were allowed to edit or amend any comments during the meeting. Unfortunately, Dr. Lott could not join the zoom meeting; however, he emailed his comments ahead of time and they're included below.

While one can read the comments below and glean what they will, I wanted to highlight what I found most helpful.

Based on their individual and collective experiences, they felt that as a leader and counselor, I did a good job of making sure none of my team members were left out. However, I could work on making sure that none of them were left behind. The committee noted that I tend to think, work, and mentor quickly and at high levels. Their impression was that I am not always sensitive to the fact that not everyone operates in the same way.

While I heard their assessment(s), I personally felt my job/ministry is to be aware of these assessments and not necessarily change because of them. For example, as a professor who primarily teaches PhD students, I tell my students that my job is to move and mentor them from being my students to being my colleagues. For that to happen, earlier in their academic pursuits than their sometimes happy with, I begin speaking to them and treating them like a colleague. They are expected to understand, write, and research at a higher level than what they may be used to.

My intention is not that they necessarily "struggle to get there." Instead, it is that "they get there through struggle." I truly believe that muscles get stronger through resistance.

Again, below are the individual comments from committee members.

Committee Members' Comments

Below are notes I took during the meeting.

Rawls: better "sweep around the room". Look more broadly, beyond the "obvious"

There is a thing that can sometimes get in the way of people being more open.

Be more aware of the fragility of peoples' sacred spaces …. Especially women.

Lucas: Given what I've done, figure out how all of this fits together … especially in this next season of life. This season of life is for me. It should be uniquely for me. Therefore, engage in more/better self reflection and thought.

Be more aware if i'm leaving someone behind … especially if someone can't or is not willing to stick around.

Fowler: For my leadership, I need to put something on paper. Doesn't matter what it's about. There are some pieces of what i share that are uniquely mine … as opposed to just something i'm "passing along." share those things that are uniquely mine … make it available on a larger scale. Before someone else tells it, or i can't, tell my story.

Keep being aware of how I occur to people.

It gives people access to power when they can hear from someone they consider a leader, when that leader is able to express when they fall short or screw up.

Sexton: I have not always felt heard.

There have been times in our conversation where you hold me to a higher standard than I should be held. I assume that someone can see everything (for/in them) that I see.

ALL: What should Juan be thinking about?

Fowler: How do I define ministry? And how does that fit into my ministry?

Multiple experiences can operate at the same time.

Rawls: She likes Nicole's question. What do you want now? The legacy question. Juan may have heard it as a head question, but it was a heart question.

Who are you beyond your titles and roles?

What's in your heart that wants voice, but gets suppressed because juan doesn't feel it's important enough.

Lucas: What will sustain who you want to be in this life?

Below are site team members' written notes, in response to the broad categories of leader, counselor and strategic engagement.

1. Leader

Sexton's Written Notes

I have known Juan Battle for approximately 26 years.

Griot Circle:

Juan Battle was the Chair of the Board at Griot Circle, and I served as a Board member. During my time on the Board, Juan Battle was a strong and effective leader who brought the Board out of a fiscal crisis. He assessed the deficiencies in the organization's operations and moved to support corrective action. He was committed, dedicated, knowledgeable and always ready to engage or encourage open and honest communication that would lead to the established goals.

Global Education Movement (GEM), Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) Refugee Project:

In January of 2021, under the leadership of Juan Battle, I participated as a supervisor on this project. As the leader he communicated the plan of action for the project, as he envisioned. However, it was my belief that additional information, that I felt I did not have, could have been provided that would have better assisted me in directing the participants/interns towards the goals. I believe he was as present as he could have been. I

also believe that I had a different expectation for the guidance that I needed in order to be a good supervisor. As the leader Juan Battle was committed, dedicated, knowledgeable, and goal driven. The project was successful because of the leadership of Juan Battle.

Site Team Statistician

Juan Battle was a site team member as I completed my DMin from NYTS. He served as the statistician for my project and walked me through completing and analyzing the results of a pre and post questionnaire. There was a lot that I did not know or understand about the process, however, Juan Battle walked with me to meet the goal.

Rawls' Written Notes:

Board Chair for the Freedom Center for Social Justice which I founded in 2009. As Chair he nearly doubled the size of our budget and board. His leadership skills and knowledge of successful non-profit strategies for success helped usher us into a next phase of organizational growth and sustainability. It also helped us get to a place of solvency that carried us through the difficult shut downs of 2020-2022. I found him to be an inspirational leader and a master strategist.

Fowler's Written Notes:

I was recruited to the Board of Directors of Griot Circle, Inc., by Juan Battle. I see in hindsight that Juan identified both an area of personal and professional growth for me by having my consider being of service to the organization, and how the organization might grow as a result of what I could provide to the Board. Juan's leadership on the Board was

often helping to clarify actions that needed to be taken and finding ways to encourage people to use their own gifts and talents to address those needs. As the Co-Chair of the Board he did not bully, and he did create a space where we could hold ourselves accountable for what we were individually and collectively doing to advance the financial and institutional goals of the organization.

I've also seen over the past 28 years Juan spend a great deal of time with individuals supporting them as they journeyed to become leaders in their lives. There are more stories than I can actually remember, notwithstanding my own coaching with and by Juan, of people who either found themselves at a crossroads, or found themselves lost on a road. Juan is a compassionate listener, a clean mirror in which people can see and honor their experiences. They/we particularly can look at our experiences without shame or guilt. Leaders don't tell people what to do. Leaders help people do things for themselves and the communities to which they belong. He is also a solutions oriented person. In our own walk together we realized some time ago that when sharing a problem with Juan, if I only needed to be witnessed wasn't particularly interested in doing anything about the situation, I could say that. Creating boundaries and manners of engagement are also a strength Juan brings to his leadership and cultivation of the people in his sphere of influence.

Lott's Written Notes:

When looking at the three competencies (i.e., Leader, Counselor, Strategic Engager), I've observed that Juan tends to integrate all three. With respect to leading and counseling, I've witnessed Juan directly help hundreds of people and the impact of his indirect engagement

has probably helped hundreds of thousands, if not millions. For instance, every time I meet one of his former or current students or friends, they always talk about the various ways in which Juan has guided them through their educational, economic, and life journey. On our two research trips to refugee camps in South Africa, Malawi, Rwanda, and Kenya, Juan was able to showcase himself as an integrator at all sites. The one experience that was most impressive was at the Dzaleka Camp in Malawi where we administered and scored the HiSet exam, which gets students on their way to a High School Equivalency Credential. We administered the test to well over 200 Dzaleka residents. Impressively, Juan was able to recruit a team of Dzaleka residents and trained them how to score the exam, enter the results in the Excel, calculate descriptive, and report the results. It was just one of the amazing experiences that I've seen Juan engage as a Master Teacher, which no doubt he is.

It's been apparent to me in the 16 years that I've know Juan, that he authentically, genuinely, and unconditionally loves people and loves to help them take things to the next level. One trait that endears Juan to many is his excellent listening skills. He always wants to help people with their problems and ALWAYS intently and patiently listens as people articulate their issues. I would definitely encourage him to continue being a good listener, as that will continue to serve him well as he continues his journey.

Lucas's Written Notes

Dr. Juan Battle is a gifted leader who understands the process of cultivating human potential and developing talent at both the individual and organizational level. Juan is skilled at motivating others by creating an environment where people can grow and hone their managerial/leadership skills. I have witnessed Juan's ability to empower and motivate others

in multiple settings. For example, during various sessions at the American Sociological Conference for graduate students participating in the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP), Juan made it a priority to connect with budding scholars who wanted to know what it took to be successful and become leaders in the field of sociology and in various areas within academia. Juan quickly dispelled any myths about what it took to be a successful academician, and he detailed practical tools for success as he journeyed through his own success as a scholar. The most important part of Juan's message to the students during the various sessions was to help and guide others along their journey in the same way they were being helped. Many of the Fellows went on to obtain their doctoral degrees, publish important articles/books/research, achieve full professorship, and become leaders within their institutions.

2. Counselor

Sexton's Written Notes:

Juan Battle has provided professional counseling to me on various occasions. He openly shared his past experiences as a faith-community leader, and leadership experiences in various arenas that he thought could be helpful to my situation. On more than one occasion I believed that Juan Battle held me to a higher standard than I thought I should have been. Although he has always been open and available to listen to me, I have not always felt heard.

Rawls Written Notes:

Juan has played an invaluable role in my ascension as a faith leader, activist and professional. His advice has helped me navigate through a wide range of liturgical, financial and organizational environments that were not always supportive of women. His feminist lens helped me and I in turn have been able to share so much of these learnings with other women, trans folk and fem identified men. He has also been open to learning and owning the privilege that is his as a male scholar and consummate organizer. I have seen him offer these gifts not just to me, but countless others who had the good fortune to cross paths with him. He is an amazing servant leader.

Lucas's Written Notes:

Dr. Juan Battle has touched thousands, if not millions of lives through his open, honest, genuine conversations with people from all walks of life. Juan is great at journeying with

others through expected and/or unexpected transitions in life. His strong belief in God and faith that “everything works for good” permeates through his words, actions, and commitment to the healing process. I have personally observed Juan journey through an extremely difficult situation with a mutual friend who, in one day, experienced the deep pain of temporarily losing her children because she was arrested and put in jail. When this person was released from jail, she did not have a place to stay or a job. As bleak as this situation seemed, Juan was wholeheartedly committed to connecting with and helping his friend. As a result of many conversations and acts of support and kindness, this person is currently living in her own apartment and successfully co-parents with her ex-husband. She also has a stable job and is making more money than she has ever made. My favorite part of this experience/situation is that her faith and belief in God is as strong as ever. Juan continuously demonstrates that he can guide others and help those in pain, and in difficult situations sustain, endure, and work through difficulties. Juan is also great at being present for the successes and celebrations because this is also an important part of the healing process and the human experience.

3. Strategic Engagement

Sexton

Based on my observations and experience working with Juan Battle, he has demonstrated effective methods of finding, attracting, and keeping the best customers for whatever project he is working on. I witnessed this on the Board of Griot, with the SNHU Refugee Project, and during the time that we worked together on various projects at Unity Fellowship of Christ Church, NYC, a social justice, not-for-profit religious institution. I believe that he excels in this competency, however, there may be some personal goals that he has in this area that he may wish to pursue.

Rawls

More than ever, smart strategies are needed to not only shift toxic systems and structures, but to also assist in the reimagining of possibilities where none seemed to exist. I have witnessed him time and again entering conversations or meetings where he singularly found a path and almost instantly considered how to fund it and assemble a dynamic team within moments. This kind of gifting is critical to the complex world we live in. It is important to note that I believe the best is yet to come as he enters this next chapter of his incredible story. The world is a better, more just place, because Juan Battle is in it.

Lott

Looking at the questions under Strategic Engagement, Juan has been seemingly asking the questions about how to spend his time for the last 7 years. I would encourage him to adopt the same strategies as he encourages others to do—research what other people have done

when seeking a more refined purpose in life. Juan encourages people to not recreate the wheel because whatever someone wants to do there are others who have already done it. How can Juan find strategies from others that he admires who have refined their purpose in life and adopt/adapt them?

Lucas

I believe that in every stage in our life we must ask ourselves what we would like to work on and contribute while keeping in mind time and access to resources. One of the criteria Juan seems to employ when choosing a project to engage in is impact. He often envisions the potential impact of a project during the planning stage and then works to ensure that the impact is as big or bigger than what was originally envisioned. Juan is also great at working with groups of talented and creative people who are invested and motivated. Also, he has mastered the process of garnering resources and funding instrumental in supporting and maintaining various projects. Juan has been involved in a plethora of local, national, and international projects and initiatives, and this may be the opportune time for Juan to reflect on how he would like to intentionally shape what he would like his legacy to be.

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